



BORDERLAND CONFLICTS:

THE CASE OF SOOL REGION IN SOMALILAND

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1. Executive Summary

Inter-clan conflicts in Sool are situated in a highly politicized environment where various actors often intervene with conflict resolution processes. These external actors include the federal government of Somalia, Puntland, informal radical groups such as Al-Shabab and ISIS and clan-based militia (who have fought both Somaliland and Puntland government). These clan-based militias have influence on (a) the organization and dynamics of inter-clan warfare, (b) the structure of clan reconciliation processes, and (c) the nature, timing and implementation of inter-clan peace agreements. The increasing politicization and securitization of clan-based peace building processes can therefore be traced to the significant sway that external actors have on the process.

The presence of Al-Shabaab in Sool poses a significant threat to the region's security. Government officials (mainly from the Dhulbahante clan) have been assassinated by Al-Shabab and other unknown groups thus undermining sustainable conflict resolution efforts in the region. Unlike other regions of Somaliland, Al-Shabab has become a dominant player in both economics (informal collection of revenues from major business centers) and insecurity (killing high profile government officials). In the last five years, the group's dominance in these two arenas has increased thus threatening the security of the region. At the same time, the frequent assassination of high-ranking government and clan officials has activated revenge attacks which continue to fuel clan-based conflicts and undermine conflict resolution efforts.

The Somaliland government must act swiftly in order to prevent further assassinations by terrorist organizations in the Sool region. Stopping the assassinations would enhance confidence in government, protect human lives bolster area security and enhance stability.

Land mismanagement and maladministration are also a major source of inter-clan conflicts in Sool. Due to the failure by government to implement the National Land Policy¹ that was meant to streamline land management in Somaliland, pastoralist grazing land has been commercialized creating conflict with pastoralist communities that largely depend on pasture for their livestock. The failure to classify and gazette farming, commercial and grazing land has exacerbated the land related tensions between rural communities and undermined inter-communal peace and harmony. Increasing climate change has led to frequent droughts and famines which have decreased livestock and crop output thus undermining the Somaliland's economy that is heavily reliant on livestock production. Consequently, rural livelihoods have been disrupted resulting in conflict over water resources as people struggle to

¹ These failures have been attributed to weak institutional capacity.

mitigate the impacts of climate change. Thus, although many stakeholders have attempted to promote peace within the Sool region, resource-based conflicts have largely undermined the sustainability of such efforts.

Customary dispute resolution processes. Although Somaliland has a functional judiciary, inter-clan and intra-clan disputes in the Sool region are largely resolved through customary law. This is especially pronounced in the resource-based conflicts where elders from conflict clans continue to play an important role. However, claims of biasness by the government, lack of enforcement of peace agreements and lack of goodwill from conflicting parties have continued to undermine the sustainable dispute resolution.

Privatization of water points and grazing land. The increasing privatization of communal resources and development of settlements around water points and grazing lands continue to trigger clan related conflicts and various clans compete for control of these resources. Weak and inefficient land laws coupled with the failure by the Somaliland government to enforce existing land policies has further aggravated the situation.

Exclusion of women from peacebuilding efforts. It has now been largely agreed that sustainable peace both domestically and internationally must embrace a gender perspective and incorporate both men and women.² **This reality is born out of the fact that conflict affects men and women differently and conflict resolution must therefore embrace both genders. At the same time, the unequal and dire impact of conflicts on women often justify their inclusion in conflict resolution.** However, because of the patriarchal nature of Somali traditional structures, peace-building is solely dominated by men with women largely relocated to the margins. However, the changing roles of women in Somaliland over the last two decades has opened up the public spaces to women resulting into their increasing involvement in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Despite this progress, their role is still limited.

2. Background

Lascaanood is Sool's capital city; it is surrounded by Ainabo, Hudun, and Taleex districts. Sool is almost solely (with the exception of Ainabo district³) populated by the Darood sub-clan of Dhulbahante, which is a branch of the larger Harti-Darood family that dominates neighboring Puntland. The latest

² Dini, Shukria. "Women building peace: Somali women in Puntland and Somaliland." *conflict trends* 2009.2 (2009): 31-37.

³ Ainabo is mostly inhabited by Isaaq and its the second largest city in Sool

population estimates (2014) projects Sool's population to be 327,428 people, with 36 percent of the inhabitants living in urban areas and 62 percent living in rural regions. IDPs constitute about 2% of the Sool population.⁴ Most Sool inhabitants are pastoralists who largely derive their livelihoods from trade in livestock. Camels and sheep are the most common livestock among Sool pastoralists, and the selling of livestock products (milk, ghee, and meat) is the primary source of income production for the pastoralist families.⁵

Generally, reliance on pastoralism increases vulnerability to climatic changes. Droughts (which are quite frequent in Sool) often lead to decline in livestock sales and production, increased cost of living due to the fact that families have to regularly purchase water for livestock and human use, reduced pasture and increased livestock and human mortality due to drought and famine respectively ⁶. This report examines the historical causal factors of the conflict in Sool region, identifies the main factors and players in inter-clan conflicts and proposes new areas of intervention for local partners and communities.

3. Historical context of the conflict in Sool

Somaliland got independence from British colonial rule on 26th June, 1960. Somaliland existed as a sovereign state for only five days before joining the Italian Somaliland in a voluntary union on July 1, 1960, marking the end of its independence and the creation of Somalia. However, by this time, the United Nations and 35 countries had recognized Somaliland's independence. After a brief period of civilian government, Siad Barre was installed as President of Somalia in a military coup in 1969. Siad Barre, desired to unite the Greater Somali territories which included Somali refugees living in Ethiopia's Somali region, Djibouti, and Kenya's Northern districts. To accomplish this goal, Siad Barre spent the vast majority of the country's national resources on military operations and expansion.⁷ His political aim of building a Greater Somali state culminated in the invasion of Ethiopia's Ogaden region in 1978, an action that marked the beginning of the end of his reign as the Somalia forces suffered heavy losses.

⁴ Population Estimation Survey 2014. UNFPA. <https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf>

⁵ Interview, Lascanood, March 6, 2022

⁶ UN, "Inter-agency assessment of Sool Plateau and Gebi Valley Sool & Sanaag regions" 2003 –accessed from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/084EE8B58742D08149256DDE002360D6-un-som-14nov.pdf> .

⁷ Sam Wilkins. "Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden: Lessons from an Obscure Cold War Flashpoint in Africa." (2019, 6th September). Accessed from War on the Rocks. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/09/buried-in-the-sands-of-the-ogaden-lessons-from-an-obscure-cold-war-flashpoint-in-africa/>.

The Union between Italian and British Somaliland, (that resulted into the creation of Somalia) lasted until 1991, when Barre's administration collapsed. As a result of the fall of Siad Barre's administration, the Somali National Movement (SNM) declared Somaliland's restoration of sovereignty on May 18, 1991, at a clan conference in Burco. When Somaliland declared its unilateral independence and dissolution of the 1960 union with Somalia in 1991, it claimed that the area inherited from colonial powers, which comprised the Sool and Sanaag districts, was included in its borders, creating a destabilizing element for future relations between Somaliland and Somalia.⁸

Between 1991 and 1998 Somalia descended into years of chaos and political disorder. The failure to establish an effective central government as well as the absence of an official authority in the territory prompted the formation of Puntland as an autonomous region in Somalia. In contrast to Somaliland, Puntland never proclaimed independence from the rest of Somalia and has remained as one of the founding federal member states of what became known as 'the Federal Government of Somalia'.⁹ The declaration of independence by Somaliland and the subsequent recognition of Puntland's newly discovered autonomy signaled the beginning of a territorial dispute over the territories of Sool and eastern Sanaag both of which are dominated by the Harti clan.

The overlapping territorial claims of Puntland and Somaliland over Sool and eastern Sanaag have substantial ramifications for the political, social, economic, and security situations in the two territories. The territorial claims of Puntland are based on ethnic connection between members of the Harti-Darood clan and their genealogy, whereas Somaliland maintains that its territory extends to the determination of borders during the colonial period¹⁰. The situation at the frontiers remains unstable, despite the fact that the boundary conflict between Puntland and Somaliland has diminished in recent years compared to the early 2000s.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Data Collection

This study was largely based on descriptive and exploratory designs. The research process was organized in three sessions. Firstly, a methodology workshop was held in Hargeisa on March 3rd,

⁸ Omar Mohamood, who will be born in 2019. The Case of Sool and Sanaag is an example of overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland. The Institute for Security Studies is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of national security. <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ear27.pdf>

⁹ Ahmed Musa, 2021. The politics of borderland trade between Somaliland and Puntland. The Rift Valley Institute. https://riftvalley.net/sites/default/files/publication-documents/RVI%202021.10.01%20Lasanod_City%20at%20the%20Margins_0.pdf

¹⁰ Ibid.

during which the study framework, interview schedules, and work plans were prepared. In addition, the lead researcher undertook a review of the literature to identify research gaps and available resources. The second phase involved a field trip to the Lascanood and Xudun Districts of Sool, where eight key informant interviews and seven focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. These interviews included interviews with regional government representatives, the governor of Lascanood, traditional leaders, clan leaders, public intellectuals, college students, members of the local council, and women's groups. The FGDs lasted for an average of 45 minutes and consisted of 10-15 participants. The Interviews and focus group discussions were videotaped by APD's audio visual team. The third component of the process was a workshop in which the research team presented findings to the APD management team. The last bit involved consolidation and finalization of this conflict assessment report.

4.2 Participation Action Research

As part of its research strategy, APD employs Participatory Action Research (PAR), in which stakeholders are involved in the research design stages, field operation, validation of the research findings, and prioritizing of suggestions, among other research processes. As a result, PAR procedures were followed throughout the course of this investigation. For the purpose of data collection and analysis, a qualitative research design was used. In addition to secondary sources, primary data was acquired through key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) as explained above. PAR ensured that research participants and stakeholders could shape and benefit from knowledge generation which could in turn, influence their dispute resolution technics at the grassroots level and further shape their response to conflict, climate change, drought and famine.

5. Research Findings

5.1.1 Disputes between Somaliland and Somalia

Following the dissolution of the 1960 union, Somaliland unilaterally withdrew from the union with Somalia in May 1991. Despite the lack of international recognition, Somaliland has operated as a separate country with its own currency, passport, army and administration for the past three decades.¹¹ Somaliland's claim to sovereignty is anchored on a number of legitimate factors, including widespread public support for recognition and Somaliland's claim to sovereignty. Hargeisa maintains that Somaliland did not secede from Somalia, but rather dissolved a voluntary union that united two

¹¹ Berouk Mesfin, "The Political Development of Somaliland and its Conflict with Puntland." 2009. Institute for Security Studies. <https://media.africaportal.org/documents/P200.pdf>

sovereign states¹². As a result, Somaliland restored its sovereignty and statehood, which should be sufficient ground to justify international recognition. Although it lacks formal statehood, Somaliland meets all of the criteria for being a state: it has a defined territory, a functioning government, a permanent population of over four million people, and the ability to establish diplomatic ties with foreign countries.¹³

The conflict between Somaliland and Somalia is centered on the legitimacy of Somaliland's statehood. While Mogadishu maintains that Somaliland is a member state of Somalia and that Somaliland's claim to independence has never been acknowledged by Mogadishu, Somaliland holds that it is a sovereign state that operates independently¹⁴. Political discussions between Mogadishu and Hargeisa have failed on several occasions, and there are no indicators that they will succeed in brokering peace between the two countries in the foreseeable future.

The visit by Somalia's Minister of Planning, Investment, and Development to a village in eastern Sanaag in January 2018 and the signing of a port operation contract between Hargeisa and DP World, a corporation controlled by the United Arab Emirates, further fueled tensions between Somaliland and Somalia¹⁵.)

The DP World contract was worth \$442 million. The contract entitles the company to operate and administer the Berbera Port, which was completed in 2016. However, Somalia considered the agreement as being part of UAE's interference in matters of Somalia's sovereignty. Consequently, both Chambers of Somalia's Parliament passed a bill declaring the pact illegal in its entirety and prohibiting DP World from conducting business in the country. The Bill has since been signed by the Somalia President. President Bihi of Somaliland responded by declaring that Somalia's rejection of the Berbera deal constituted a "declaration of war".¹⁶.

Diplomatic tiffs between Somalia and Somaliland worsened when Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Somalia's Minister of Planning visited his hometown of Badhan, in the eastern part of Sanaag, one of the disputed regions between Puntland and Somaliland. Hassan's travel to the region marked the first time

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Somalia-Somaliland: The Perils of Delaying New Talks*. (2019, July 12). Crisis Group.

¹⁶ Berouk Mesfin, "The Political Development of Somaliland and its Conflict with Puntland." 2009. Institute for Security Studies. <https://media.africaportal.org/documents/P200.pdf>

a Minister from Mogadishu had visited the region since Somaliland's declared its independence in 1991 authorities in Hargeisa considered the visit to be part of larger territorial claims by Somalia.¹⁷

The suspicions resulted in skirmishes between Somaliland and Puntland forces in the town of Tukaraq in the Somali region. Dozens of soldiers died in the fight, and Somaliland forces took control of the key town of Tukaraq, which had previously been under Puntland control.

An increase in hostility between Somalia and Somaliland resulted in increased competition for foreign assistance. A deal signed in 2013 that permitted international donors to transfer help directly to Somaliland without going through Somalia was rescinded by Somalia in June 2022. Farmajo's government justified its actions on the basis that, "singling out a specific state or region for special arrangements could have a major impact on attempts to strengthen federalism and nation-building¹⁸". Somaliland considers this position as an act of hostility.

5.1.2 Impact of the Somaliland and Somalia political divisions on local populations.

The political rift between Somaliland and Somalia has had ramifications at the local level. The population of Sool is largely divided politically. One section of the population supports the Federal Government of Somalia and/or the state of Puntland and sees it as the legitimate government while the more pro- independence sections of the Sool society support Somaliland's independence and territorial claims in the region. A third group of citizens favors a unique political arrangement similar to the Khatumo state.¹⁹

These divergent views have also caused differences within the Dhulbahante clans. Some clans such as Ugadhiyahan sub-clan of Dhulbahante, have historically supported Somalia's government while other groups like the Jaamac Siyad clan have generally been more proximal and supportive of the Somaliland government. These dynamics were noted during the data collection for this study. For instance, during a consultation meeting between APD Researchers and Hudun traditional leaders, an Ugadhiyahan elders expressed disappointment with the Somaliland government, noting that "Maybe we would have been better off under the Farmajo administration".²⁰ A similar meeting with Jaamac Siyad elders was characterized by greater support for the Somaliland government.²¹

¹⁷ *Somalia-Somaliland: The Perils of Delaying New Talks*. (2019, July 12). Crisis Group.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ a rebel organization established in 2012 with the goal of uniting the Sool, Sanaag, and Buhoodle district of Togdheer under a Dhulbahante administration

²⁰ FGD with Ugadhiyahan elders, Hudun, March 9, 2022

²¹ FGD with Jaamac Siyad elders, Lascaanood, March 6, 2022

Disputes Between Somaliland and Puntland

The Sool region has served as a staging ground for the political ambitions of Somaliland and Puntland for many years. The contested region of Sool is mostly inhabited by the Darood sub-clan of Dhulbahante, which is a part of the Darood ethnic group. Somaliland's territorial claims are founded on the maintenance of authority over colonial territory, which includes the areas of Sool and Sanaag. On the other hand, Puntland asserts sovereignty over the two territories based on ethnic and clan affiliations. Following a visit to Lascanood by Somaliland's President Dahir Rayale in 2002, the overlapping territorial claims of Garowe (the capital of Puntland) and Hargeisa over the Sool and Sanaag basins became more intense. This in essence, marked the first visit by a Somaliland president to the region.²² However, Puntland saw Rayale's journey to the contested region as a threat. As a result of this suspicion Puntland forces retaliated by attacking Rayale's convoy. Rayale retreated to Ainabo, and the confrontation opened the way for Puntland's takeover of the Sool region the following year.²³

Until 2007, Sool was under the control of Puntland. However, with the help of Ahmed Abdi Haabsade, the then Minister of Interior for Puntland, Somaliland was able to gain control of Sool. This eventuality led to an altercation between Mr. Haabsade and Puntland's President, Abdilahi Yusuf, eventually leading to his resignation.

Haabsade's allegiance to Somaliland also enabled the Somaliland administration to effectively seize control of Lascanod in 2007.²⁴ Accordingly, Puntland's army withdrew to the village of Tukaraq, 50 Kilometers East of Garoowe, where they remained until 2018²⁵. Majority of Dhulbahante groups, on the other hand, were dissatisfied with Somaliland's 'annexation' of Sool and the dominance of Isaaq clan in Dhulbahante territory. The overlapping territorial claims over Sool and Sanaag and the tense situation opened room for clan leaders and politicians to push through their clan and personal interests. The border dispute thus resulted in the emergence of what Markus Hoehne refers to as "border entrepreneurs"²⁶. This group of entrepreneurs, like Haabsade, is made up of individuals or

²² Ahmed Musa, 2021. The politics of borderland trade between Somaliland and Puntland. The Rift Valley Institute. https://riftvalley.net/sites/default/files/publication-documents/RVI%202021.10.01%20Lasanod_City%20at%20the%20Margins_0.pdf

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Omar Mohamood, 2019. Overlapping Claims by Somaliland and Puntland: The Case of Sool and Sanaag. Institute for Security Studies. <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ear27.pdf>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Markus Hoehne, Between Somaliland and Puntland. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Between%20Somaliland%20and%20Puntland%20by%20Markus%20Hoehne%20-%20RVI%20Contested%20Borderlands%20%282015%29%20%281%29.pdf>

clan-based groupings that use their prestige and power to establish relationships with both regimes or to switch allegiances depending on their interests.

Since 2007, Somaliland has had complete sovereignty over the town of Lascanood and the surrounding Sool area. However, as a result of the Dhulbahante clan's strong discontent with the border conflict between Majeerten-dominated Puntland and Isaaq-controlled Somaliland, Dhulbahante's elites decided to look for alternative political arrangements that served the interests of the clan.²⁷ The Dhulbahante's dissatisfaction with the presence of the Puntland and Somaliland governments in the region resulted in the establishment of the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn (SSC) administration in 2009 to administer the the larger contested territories of Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn²⁸. The SSC was, however, disbanded in 2011 due to internal disagreements.

The founding of the SSC, was an indication of the Dhulbahante and Warsengeli factions' dissatisfaction with Puntland and Somaliland competing agendas and control over their areas, as well as their dissatisfaction with each other.²⁹ The overthrow of the SSC administration in 2012, resulted in the establishment of Khatumo. Just like the SSC, the Khatumo political project was established to bring Sool under the jurisdiction of a Dhulbahante political administration³⁰. Despite the fact that Khatumo enjoyed higher legitimacy than the SSC, it was forced to disband in 2017 after reaching an agreement with the Somaliland government that included terms such as increased political representation for the Dhulbahante, among other things³¹.

5.2.2 Elections and (more) Marginalization of the Dhulbahante

Present day Sool is politically and economically marginalized. In the 2021 elections, the representation of clans from Sool and Eastern Sanaag was low. Despite the fact that there was a significant increase in voter registration and turnout in Lascanood and its surrounding towns³², the increase did not translate to meaningful representation for the Dhulbahante. In fact, Dhulbahante's parliamentary seats

²⁷ Omar Mohamood, 2019. Overlapping Claims by Somaliland and Puntland: The Case of Sool and Sanaag. Institute for Security Studies. <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ear27.pdf>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The significant increase in Sool's voter turnout can be explained by the expansion of Somaliland's territorial control over Sool which includes all major electoral districts, increased discontent of Dhulbahante supporters with the Puntland State and the Federal Government of Somalia's engagement with the region combined with increased campaigns by Sool MPs promoting voter registration and turnout (APD 2021)

dropped from seven to six seats in the 2021 elections³³. Meanwhile, in Eastern Sanaag, voter turn-out was poor which resulted in the loss of four parliamentary seats previously held by Warsengeli representatives.³⁴ The poor representation and incorporation of clans from Sool and Eastern Sanaag into Somaliland's political structure could undermine the local legitimacy of the government.

The political exclusion of communities from Sool and Eastern Sanaag is further exacerbated by economic disparities. While conducting this assessment, participants lamented that the disproportionate distribution of aid and development packages in the country had disadvantaged the Sool region. Expressing concern over this marginalization, one participant declared;

Sool gets limited support from Somaliland's international partners. There are few organizations that have satellite offices in the region and development funds rarely make their way to Sool. This is because many of the aid agencies consider Sool an insecure area and as such international organizations cannot operate in the region due to security concerns. However, the region is safe and stable, and the Somaliland government needs to change the rhetoric around Sool.³⁵

Nevertheless, the legitimacy of Somaliland's presence in Sool has grown in recent years, particularly in the last five to six years. The Somaliland administration is gaining popularity in the region, in part due to the improvement of social services provided by the government. Besides constructing five roads, establishing Lascanood's Nugaal University and refurbishing the General Hospital the government also established schools in rural areas and set up maternal and child health centers.³⁶

The increasing acceptance of Somaliland administration over Sool is however undermined by the overlapping territorial claims of Puntland and Somaliland over Sool and Sanaag. These disagreements undermine negotiations for sustainable peace and stability. The security situation in the region is worsened by inter-clan conflicts over depleting resources and the existence of extremist groups in the area.

³³ *Building on Somaliland's successful elections*. Crisis Group. (2021, August 12).

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somaliland/b174-building-somalilands-successful-elections>

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Youth FGD, Lascanood, March 5, 2022

³⁶ Ahmed Musa, 2021. The politics of borderland trade between Somaliland and Puntland. The Rift Valley Institute. https://riftvalley.net/sites/default/files/publication-documents/RVI%202021.10.01%20Lasanod_City%20at%20the%20Margins_0.pdf

5.3 Informal Players: Al-Shabab

There are factions of Al-shabaab and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) affiliated groups present in Sool. The border conflict between Somaliland and Puntland has provided an opportunity for these groups to infiltrate and radicalize youths within the Sool region.³⁷ To boost their income, the ISIS and Al-Shabaab affiliates impose taxes on businesses in exchange for security and engage in charcoal trade.³⁸ They also smuggle weapons and explosives into the Sool community thus worsening the security situation. Furthermore, Al-shabaab affiliated groups have been accused of assassinating senior political leaders and clan figures. Local estimates indicate that over 90 people have died in these attacks in the recent past.³⁹ Although these attacks often take place during the day the Somaliland security apparatus has failed to foil the attacks or arrest perpetrators.

Other than the inefficiency of the Somaliland security apparatus, respondents cited lack of corporation by the local community as one of the obstacles to the investigation and prevention of the terrorist attacks. The lack of community support towards counter- terrorism measures is driven by two factors- apathy towards the government officials in which some citizens of the region feel excluded from government programmes and fear of reprisal by the terrorist organizations. One elder explains;

Upon leaving a mosque after finishing Asr prayer, I heard the person behind me get shot. But before I had the chance to look, shots were fired from all sides, and I ran from the place and never looked back.⁴⁰ The attacks on powerful people in Lascaanood have increased significantly since 2010. These targeted killings take place on a regular basis throughout the region. Contrary to expectations, however, there is a paucity of statistics and information on the number of deaths as well as on the identities and affiliations of the perpetrators. Although a majority of those assassinated are government officials, the dominant narrative in the community seems to suggest a direct involvement or complicity of government a suspicion born by the government's failure to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators.⁴¹ At the same time, the increased terrorist attacks have led to skepticism of both the Somaliland local government officials and the security apparatus in the area. To boost security and reduce the risk of assassinations thousands of people from the Sool and Sanaag regions who were originally from Southern and Central Somalia have been deported by the Somaliland government back to their homeland within Somalia.⁴²

³⁷ Interview with security official

³⁸ Interview with intellectuals, Lascaanood, March 7, 2022

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Elders FGD, Lascaanood, March 6, 2022

⁴¹ Interview with intellectuals, Lascaanood, March 3, 2022

⁴² For details, see the **The Rahanweyn Case**

5.3.2 The Rahanweyn Case

In October 2021, the Somaliland Ministry of Interior deported thousands of people from the Somalia central regions. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Ministry deported about 7,250 persons, most of whom were from Somalia's Southwest, Hirshabelle, and Banaadir states (locally known as Rahanweyn), as well as a few from Ethiopia. Majority of those who were deported had lived in Somaliland for decades and had modest businesses in Lascanood and Erigabo. The administration defended these deportations by claiming that they were necessary to increase the security of Sool and Sanaag. According to an official letter from Somaliland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the people deported from Sool were thought to constitute a threat to the security of Lascanood and the surrounding regions. A second explanation put up by the authorities was that the assassinations were carried out by members of the Rahanweyn community in Lascanood. Despite the deportations, attacks on prominent Lascanood leaders have continued unabated.

Although it has not claimed responsibility, Alshabaab is widely suspected to be behind the assassinations. The increased assassinations have led to increased emigration from the region thus worsening the instability in the region. One teenage FGD participants explains;

Because of the growing number of assassinations of significant persons (such as doctors and judges) in the region, fear and distrust have been instilled in the local community. As a result of the violence, several families have relocated to other cities to seek refuge. Assassinations have grown far too common in recent years, and as a result, everyone is scared.⁴³

The Somaliland government must act swiftly in order to prevent further assassinations from taking place. In contrast, if the government does not move quickly to bolster area security and prevent more unjust executions of civilians, it would weaken regional stability as well as the public's trust in the government.

Assassinations by Al-shabaab have contributed to increased revenge killings. For instance, when someone commits murder, the family of the perpetrator usually meets with the bereaved family, and

⁴³ Focus Group discussion in Lascanood.

an agreement is reached on the blood compensation and the deadline for the payment. However, revenge killings commonly happen either when negotiations fail or when blood compensations are delayed⁴⁴. In these instances, one of the family members of the victim would become impatient and kill someone from the murderer's clan. This then unleashes a cycle of revenge killings which easily leads to an inter-clan conflict. This already revenge prone environment is often made more volatile by the Al-Shabaab's attacks which incidentally, also fuel clan conflicts.

5.4 Drought and Resource-Based Conflict in Sool.

Pastoral and agricultural communities are built on the foundation of land and water. The Sool region has long experienced land-based disputes. Nevertheless, the socio-economic developments that occurred after 1991 have increased conflicts and competition for resources. A number of factors, including the commercialization of livestock and the alteration of pastoralist living patterns, droughts, and the depletion of natural resources (such as charcoal production), enhanced competition for land have increased the intensity of resource-based conflicts.⁴⁵ Resource based conflicts have been centered on competition for water sources, pasture grounds, and arable lands. The emergence and expansion of town as well as mega infrastructure projects have further put pressure on land. Thus, worsening the competition and conflict.

According to the Ministry of Environment, climate change has resulted in rapid soil degradation which has resulted in loss of vegetation, soil erosion, and deforestation. Overgrazing, increased agricultural operations, and land enclosures have all had an impact on animal feed and grazing patterns in recent years. At the same time,, the growth of berkad (water reservoirs) have increased the concentration of humans and cattle in a given area, resulting in overgrazing and soil erosion, as well as water deterioration. These factors have cumulatively reduced the land that can be available for farming and pastoralism thus squeezing communities and clans in small parcels and causing conflicts as communities struggle to increase the size of their grazing land by displacing neighboring clans and communities.

Climate change has equally resulted into droughts and irregular rainfall patterns which have in turn exacerbated the already-existing hazards of food insecurity and water scarcity.⁴⁶ According to a 2015 study by the Drought Response Committee, water shortages and drying of pasture have resulted in cattle losses ranging from 30% to 40% of the total herd. Furthermore, severe droughts in 2016 and 2017 affected an estimated 200,000 people, according to the United Nations Development

⁴⁴ Focus Group discussion in Lascanood.

⁴⁵ Mohamed Abdi, 2007. Land Based Conflict Project: Working Note. APD.
http://www.somalilandlaw.com/APD_Landbased_conflict.pdf

⁴⁶ Interview with representative from the Ministry of Environment, Lascanood, March 6, 2022

Programme⁴⁷. As a result of delayed rainfalls, pastoral communities in Sool are currently struggling from another prolonged drought. Interviews conducted in the Sool region indicated that many pastoralists, have lost their livestock due to the scarcity of water and pasture. Consequently, their sources of income have been depleted resulting into displacement and emigration as they search for alternative livelihoods. With the regularity of droughts, the number of people internally displaced by drought has increased

5.5 Conflict and Land Tenure System

5.5.2 Understanding of Land under Somaliland Law

According to Article 12.1 of the Somaliland Constitution, land is considered a national common property and the government is responsible for its management and administration. The Urban Planning Law (Law No. 17/2001) manages urban land, while the Agricultural Land Ownership Law (Law No. 8/99) oversees agricultural land management. Agricultural land is defined as any land suitable for farming. Grazing lands are regulated under the Law on the Prevention of Deforestation and Desertification (Law No. 4/1999). Additionally, a new national land policy has been prepared by the Somaliland government with the assistance of APD. According to the Land Policy, land tenure is divided into three categories: public land, private land and communal land. This new policy recommends the passage of a new comprehensive land management and administration legislation that would eliminate all existing legal gaps and inconsistencies and consolidate the land management system.

Somaliland's land laws have several shortcomings. Agricultural land ownership is governed by a set of laws that are divided into five categories: the Constitution, the Urban Land Management Act (Law No. 17), the Civil Code, and the Civil Procedure Code. The Constitution and the Urban Land Management Act are the primary land regulation instruments. All of these instruments however, contain significant gaps including the overlapping institutional mandates on land administration, unclear land tenure systems that create overlapping rights, and lack of a clear framework on the resolution of land disputes. Pastoralists' rights are not legally protected under any of the country's laws, which puts grazing regions subject to land grabbing by farmers and private investors. Inadequate land governance structures have undermined and thus undermined efficient use of land. A further

⁴⁷ Republic of Somaliland Ministry of Environment and Rural Development Strategic Plan (2017-2021). (2017). https://rise.esmap.org/data/files/library/somalia/Clean%20Cooking/Supporting%20Documentation/Somalia_Final-Strategic-Plan-for-MOERD.pdf

contributing factor and a primary driver of local conflicts over resources is the inability by local institutions to fulfill their tasks, implement regulations, and control local affairs.

Agricultural and grazing fields were delineated during the colonial era as well as during the reign of Siad Barre, respectively. In order to reserve pasture lands during the wet seasons, land was blocked off during the rainy seasons and opened up during the dry seasons for grazing.⁴⁸

5.5.3 Privatization of Communal Land and Water Sources

In the absence of a specific policy on managing grazing areas, there is increased practice of land privatization. The privatization of public lands and water sources, particularly in rural areas, has increased significantly during the last two decades. Individuals are fencing 5-10 hectares of property for a variety of personal and economic considerations. Interviews and focus group discussions conducted during this study confirm that there is an increase in the enclosures of communal land. One such enclosure is for farming purposes. Even though the region is predominantly pastoral and agricultural production is low, some people enclose land under the pretense that they are establishing farms. These enclosures are often driven by the diaspora because according to one participant, “The diaspora are the only ones that have the investment and financial resources to enclose land.”⁴⁹ According to another participant, the land that is being privatized are valleys and rangelands (in Somali dooxada iyo seeraha) which are areas suitable for grazing and should have been protected from enclosures. These private enclosures lead to resource scarcity by reducing grazing zones, blocking routes to water points and markets for livestock product sales. This widespread privatization has driven pastoralists to areas with limited pasture and water thus further constraining their livelihoods.⁵⁰ **In addition to limiting grazing zones and increasing competition for resources, the enclosure of public land for charcoal manufacturing, farming, fodder gathering, and political control is significantly contributing to inter-clan disputes.**

Despite the fact that Article 9 of Somaliland's Law No 8/99 prohibits the privatization of public and community land, government institutions are unable to implement the law, and violations are largely unpunished.⁵¹ Infact, government agencies are accused of contributing to resource-based conflicts through their failure to enforce land use legislation and collusion with private investors. For instance, a representative from the Ministry of Environment interviewed in this study explained that the

⁴⁸ Birch, I. (2008). Securing Pastoralism in East and West Africa: Protecting and Promoting Livestock Mobility Somaliland/Somali Region Desk Review. <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/G03459.pdf?>

⁴⁹ Elders FGD, Hudun, March 9, 2022

⁵⁰ Women FGD, Lascanood, March 7, 2022

⁵¹ Mohamed Abdi, 2007. Land Based Conflict Project: Working Note. APD. http://www.somalilandlaw.com/APD_Landbased_conflict.pdf

Ministry of Agriculture gives illegal farming permits and licenses in areas that are not appropriate for agricultural activity thus undermining conservation efforts.

This development is characterized by the conversion of publicly accessible wells into private ownership. For example, an individual may decide to commercialize public wells by installing a generator on a communal well. Water can be accessed quickly and effectively thanks to the generator, which reduces waiting times for customers. Because of the mechanization of the well, the businessman is able to charge individuals for the water they consume. Those who refuse to pay are denied access to the water.⁵² Individual and clan claims on such communal water points often lead to conflict. Because Somalis have a strong sense of identity and clan loyalty, conflicts that begin over the privatization and/or usage of land and water sites easily escalate into inter-clan conflicts.

In Sool, there have been allegations that the Ministry of Water often grants individuals ownership of wells that have been constructed or renovated by the government. Lack of oversight by the Ministry of Public Works, particularly in rural parts of Sool, has resulted in privatization of public wells resulting in increased conflict. According to a high-ranking source within the Ministry of Water, wells are not closely monitored by the Ministry of Water due to low resources. Instead of overseeing public wells, the Ministry constructs them, teaches a staff member to operate them, and then departs. This weak oversight has made it easy for private individuals to claim or appropriate wells and other water sources.

5.6 The Development of New Settlements

The establishment of berkads and the proliferation of settlements in the 1950s resulted in an increase in territorial ownership. During Siad Barre's regime, territorial and land ownership was increasingly entrenched and institutionalized. Clannism was established in the 1980s, and with the fall of Siad Barre's administration, was elevated to be the center of social and political order in Somalia. As a result of the battle and the massive displacement that followed, many people returned to the regions where they were born or where they felt a sense of belonging. Following their time in exile, it became critical for clans to create permanent homes in their new locations.

The pastoral way of life is characterized by its high level of mobility. However, as a result of the expansion of berkads in recent years, nomads have become more sedentary than they were previously. Pastoral communities no longer relocate during the dry season, preferring instead to draw water from local wells and berkads during the period of drought. When droughts last for an extended period of

⁵² Elders FGD, Hudun, March 9, 2022

time and water reservoirs, boreholes, and wells are depleted, nomadic people are compelled to purchase water from trucks that transport water from vast distances to their communities. This shift in Sool nomads' living patterns has contributed to environmental degradation, diminished the likelihood of grazing pastures being restored and regenerated, and encouraged the establishment of new communities in formerly uninhabited areas.

5.6.2 Humanitarian Actors, Political Machinations and the Development of Settlements

The depletion and scarcity of resources, as well as the loss of cattle by pastoralists as a result of droughts, are the primary drivers of this shift towards a sedentary lifestyle. A government official interviewed in the study observes that;

The number of settlements has been increasing for a few years now, and international organizations are the primary drivers of this trend. When organizations pledged to assist nomadic groups suffering from water shortages, repeated droughts, and drying pastures, pastoralist communities began to form towns near water sources in order to await relief from the organizations. As a result, new villages are springing up at an alarming rate, and clan territories are fast increasing.⁵³

Due to limited development and humanitarian agencies in the region, vulnerable pastoralist communities that have been repeatedly affected by droughts are generally susceptible to political machinations. These communities thus develop new settlements, to tap support from international organizations. Because this is a mutually beneficial arrangement, there is a rise in new settlements.

Experts in the region confirm that indeed, humanitarian organizations and politicians encourage sedentarization⁵⁴. One interviewee explained that it is difficult for politicians from regions with extensive pastoralist and nomadic groups to mobilize their constituents during elections because pastoralists are constantly on the move. To reduce this movement, the politicians generally encourage them to adopt sedentary lifestyles. This way, they would pay more attention to the political landscape around them and participate in political processes such as in voter registration and elections. There are two consequences to this politically motivated sedentarization. First, clans claim the lands in which they settle as their own, thus expanding clan holdings. As a result, other clans are barred from approaching the territory or accessing its resources. Second, the expansion of settlements results in the shrinkage of grazing lands, a reality that has a negative impact on the supply of cattle feed. One clan head in Lascanood explains;

⁵³ Interview with senior government official, Lascanood, March 6, 2022

⁵⁴ Elders FGD, Hudun, March 9, 2022

Pastoralist communities are being encouraged to construct settlements by politicians in order to reap political advantages during elections in exchange for bringing in humanitarian organizations that can provide financial assistance.⁵⁵

As explained earlier, the development of settlements is closely linked to the re-emergence of conflicts. An examination of a conflict between the Dhulbahante sub-clans of Ugadhiyahan and Jaamac Siyad in the following case study highlights how land privatization and new settlements lead to inter-clan conflicts in the future.

5.7 Customary Law and the Resolution of Land Disputes.

Customary law (Xeer in Somali language) is a set of procedures used to resolve conflicts ranging from land disputes, domestic issues, inter-clan conflicts, and property rights⁵⁶. Xeer is based on social values and norms, and it is an agreement often negotiated by traditional and clan elders. The rules applied in each case depend on the nature of the parties and the dispute. Clan elders, in the absence of strong government institutions, play a critical role in managing conflicts. They have thus played a central role in Somaliland's reconciliation and peace-building processes. The enforcement of customary law rests on public willingness and social pressure.

When land disputes arise, elders from the conflicting clans meet and discuss the damages, injuries, deaths incurred by each side; then, an agreement is reached involving reparations of damages and blood compensations. Traditional institutions of conflict management often deal with halting violence, compensations for damages and deaths, and prevention of future incidents. Therefore, in solving complex land disputes between clans, customary law is insufficient because agreements are not binding and there are no institutions that enforce them. Despite the prevalence of customary dispute resolution processes, the involvement of the judiciary and formal systems of conflict resolution are still important.

Because of the widespread corruption within the formal system, many land disputes are still resolved through the application of customary law. Traditional types of mediation are utilized to resolve a variety of different problems, many of which involve inter-clan fighting. These processes are more robust, trusted, and efficient than other kinds of conflict resolution. However, the lack of strong enforcement systems have undermined the ability of customary law institutions to resolve rival land

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Alasow, O.A. (2010). "Chapter Three. Traditional Somali Customary Rules". In *Violations of the Rules Applicable in Non-International Armed Conflicts and Their Possible Causes*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004164758.i-364.30>

claims, limit the growth of water points and settlements, or implement peace accords. Despite these limitations, local customary law continues to be the most effective form of conflict management in the Sool region and the wider Somaliland.

5.7.2 The Ughadhiyan and Jaamac Siyad conflict.

5.7.2.1 Background and course of the conflict

In the Dhulbahante family group, the Ugadhiyahan and Jaamac Siyaad sub-clans are two clans that have historically lived in close proximity to one another and shared resources. An ongoing fight between the two clans began at the beginning of 2020. The fight began over the construction of a borehole in a region known as Boocda, 90 Kilometers Northwest of Lascanood, which was formerly the residence of the Ugadhiyahan clan. The Jaamac Siyad group planned to dig a borehole in an area known as Boocda. On hearing the diggers drilling, a group of Ugadhiyahans intervened and told them to stop because the region was a grazing zone and not suitable for a borehole. When the digging continued, however, a violent confrontation erupted between the two groups. Two Ugadhiyahan and four Jaamac Siyaad members died in the conflict. Additionally, five members of the Ugadhiyahan clan were injured. For the most part, the confrontation was fueled by the divergent interests of the two parties involved.

The underlying causes of the conflict have not been addressed to date. To facilitate settlement, the Jamac Siyaad group still desires to drill an exploratory well. The Ugadhiyahans, on the other hand, desires to retain the area in its current undeveloped status for grazing purposes. Furthermore, the Ugadhiyahan clan thus believes that settlements should not be built at all and that all the grazing lands should be conserved, whereas the Jaamac Siyad clan believes that settlements should be established and that grazing spaces should be safeguarded. The opposing and competing principles and interests of the two clans with regard to land use that ignited the Boocda dispute have remained unchanged to the present day.

5.7.3 The Adhicideeye Peace Agreement

The clan elders of the two clans advocated for a peace pact, which was signed in Adhicideeye in September 2020 by the two clans' chiefs and elders. A total of 90 elders attended, (45 representatives from each clan) attended the peace conference. Dispute also concerned the question of the ideal mediator. The Ugadhiyahan faction preferred the Somaliland government while the Jaamac Siyad

elders preferred the Dhulbahante sub-clan. However, in a compromise, the Ugadhiyahan's appeal that the government negotiate a peace accord was eventually accepted by the Jaamac Siyad leaders. Two lawmakers from Sool, the Minister of Information & Technology, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Interior, took part in the Peace Conference. Once the negotiations got underway, the government officials instructed the clan committees to focus their attention on matters connected to blood payments and leave the land management issue to the government to resolve.

While the Ugadhiyahan clan opposed the demolition of settlements, the Jaamac Siyad group was adamant about the demolition of settlements created by the Ugadhiyahan clan, despite the fact that they also opposed the demolition of their own settlements. At the end, both clans agreed on the demolition of the settlements as well as the payment of blood payment recompense to the victims of the massacre. In summary, the Committee agreed on the following action points;

- (i) Blood and injury payments
- (ii) A schedule for blood compensation payments
- (iii) The demolition of certain settlements.
- (iv) The elders would collect the blood fees while the government would carry out the demolitions.

Before the implementation of the agreement, another battle erupted between the two clans over the ownership of a communal well known as Dhabardalool which is located about 75 Kilometers northwest of Lascaanood. The name of the well, which loosely translates to 'a hole in the back,' refers to the fact that it takes several men to enter it in order to draw water from within. Dhabardalool is a communal well that has been in use for many years now. The battle in Dhabardalool began in April of 2021, when a male member of the Jaamac Siyad clan privatized a public well after building a generator and charging others to use it, prompting outrage from the community. Due to the bad taste of Dhabardalool's water, only animals drink it. However, after it was privatized, new settlements were established near it. However, violence soon erupted between the Ugadhiyahan and the Jaamac Siyaad tribes. The conflict resulted in the deaths of 19 people (15 Ugadhiyahan: and 4 Jaamac Siyaad). 36 people were also injured in the violence (24 Ugadhiyahan and 12 Jaamac Siyaad).

5.7.4 Yagoori Peace Agreement

Yagoori hosted the second peace conference, which resulted in an accord. The Yagoori conference was attended by a number of government officials, including the Minister of Interior Affairs. During the second round of negotiations, the traditional leaders reached an agreement on death payments once more. However, before the agreement could be signed, the government representatives were asked to announce the timeline for demolishing settlements that had been agreed upon during the first round of negotiations. Although the Minister of Interior stated that there would be no demolitions, he encouraged the disputing groups to live together and share resources instead of destroying them. Enraged by the government's failure to demolish the settlements as agreed during the first peace conference, the Ugadhiyahan leaders walked out of the conference. The second conference thus aborted and no peace meetings have since been held.

Following the meeting, the Jaamac Siyad clan held a news conference in which they stated that they were pleased with the government's decision and that they were prepared to fulfill their obligations under the agreement. However, to date, they have not paid the death benefits. The Ugaadhiyahan Leaders, on the other hand, are adamant that there would be no peace accord until there is agreement on the demolition of settlements and the seizure of more establishments. Expressing his dissatisfaction with the government, an Ugadhiyahan elder explains;

We had a tremendous deal of faith and confidence in the government. We had high hopes that the administration would carry out the demolitions. However, we were disappointed. Peace negotiations, on the other hand, have been stalled since the administration has failed to fulfill its responsibilities.

The Ugadhiyahan and Jaamac Siyad clan leaders and intellectuals largely view the government's intervention as being marginal and inadequate. They hold the government responsible for the unfinished nature of the Adhicadeeye and Yagoori peace deals. This is especially because the government's failure to carry out the demolitions as agreed is seen to undermine peace prospects. Because the Jaamac Siyad clan has historically been pro-Somaliland, they have had a great deal of political assistance from the government. On the other hand, the Ugadhiyahans have historically supported the Puntland state and see themselves as marginalized by the Somaliland government. Although there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the government is biased in favor of the

Jaamac Siyaad clan, the state's violation of a consensual agreement between the two clans is concerning. The absence of a peace deal and delays in blood payments raises possibilities of revenge killings and a likelihood of renewed conflict.

5.8 Women's Exclusion from Peace Building Processes

Somali women are generally excluded from official conflict resolution processes. Due to cultural and social values that generally subordinate women, women do not participate in top decision-making processes convened to mediate conflict. Therefore, reconciliation processes are male dominated. Women also seem to be resigned to this situation with one woman explaining to the APD Researchers that “It is men that start conflicts and it is them that end it”.⁵⁷ Women are greatly impacted by inter-clan conflicts. Besides losing their husbands, sons, and brothers in conflicts, women are often exposed to sexual violence and harassment during conflict. They sometimes suffer double victimization in cases where their parents' clans and that of their husbands are fighting. In such instances their affiliations are generally questioned. Nevertheless, they are excluded from peace negotiations and conflict resolution forums. This exclusion can be attributed to the absence of women from influential social and political circles such as in clan leadership, religious institutions, political or economic spaces. Only male elders with power, wealth, or clan influence are selected to represent clans during peace conferences. As a result of this exclusion, women's needs and priorities are never reflected in peace agreements in Somaliland.

Nevertheless, women play an active role behind the scenes, usually leading peace awareness campaigns, mobilizing elders to promote peace and helping with logistics like cooking during peace conferences. Their logistical role was quite pronounced during the peace agreements. In the conflict between the Ugadhiyahan and Jaamac Siyad clans, the Regional Women's Peace committee urged the clan elders to expedite peace discussions and organized meetings with the youth to discourage them from engaging in further violence. In a focus group discussion with women, one woman opined that sometimes, women groups take loans to facilitate their peace promotion activities, including paying for the costs of transport and accommodation. However, the contributions of Sool women to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts are overshadowed by the patriarchal system that only appreciates men's contribution to peacebuilding.

Peace processes need to be more inclusive. In order for peace agreements to be legitimate and sustainable, peace negotiations and conflict resolution forums need to be more inclusive both in their procedures and substantive resolutions. In an inclusive process, all stakeholders, including women,

⁵⁷ Women FGD, Hudun, March 9, 2022

must be engaged to ensure that the needs and interests of various groups are represented. This way, peace agreements will be owned by all stakeholders. The traditional conflict management system needs to be reformed to be more inclusive and responsive to complex conflict dynamics-and the needs of women. Gender mainstreaming in conflict management is a good starting point in this direction.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conceptual Definition of Customary Law (Xeer)

Customary law is a set of procedures and unwritten conventions used to resolve conflicts ranging from land disputes, domestic issues, inter-clan conflicts, and property rights. Xeer is based on social values and norms, and it is an agreement often negotiated by traditional and clan elders. Different rules are used to mediate and resolve conflicts such as marriage matters or murder proceedings. Clan elders, in the absence of strong government institutions, play a critical role in managing conflicts, and they have played a central role in Somaliland's reconciliation and peace-building process. The enforcement of customary law rests on public willingness and social pressure.

When land disputes arise, elders from the conflicting clans meet and discuss the damages, injuries, deaths incurred by each side; then, an agreement is reached involving reparations of damages and blood compensations. Traditional institutions of conflict management often deal with halting violence, compensations for damages and deaths, and prevention of future incidents. Therefore, in solving complex land disputes between clans, customary law is insufficient because agreements aren't binding and there are no institutions that enforce them; therefore, in the resolution of land issues, the involvement of the judiciary system and formal systems of conflict resolution are important.

6.1 Implications for APD Programs

Because of the contextual elements that influence the political economy of the Sool region, the implementation of the programs will confront significant security, political and economic problems that will have a negative impact on the program's outcome. Clan-based militias, as well as Al-Shabab, represent a threat to the territories surrounding Hudan district as well as Lascanod.. For instance, anti-Somaliland clan-based militias posed a direct threat to the personal safety of those involved in the data collection and threatened the preliminary. meetings with traditional elders and neutral mediators from the warring parties during the data collection and meetings.

Political challenges, such as the ongoing border conflict between Somaliland and Somalia (Puntland), have become major problems for areas near Hudun and Taleex, both of which are important to the program's success. However, economic challenges (droughts, loss in livestock output, and limited access to remittances) and political allegiance of the local people to Somaliland, Puntland, Al-Shabaab, the Federal Government of Somalia, and Khaatumo have all had a role in aggravating the crisis.

Despite all of these difficulties, APD's decades of expertise in the area of Sool and eastern Sanaag enabled it to manage those essential concerns and thus reduced the direct risk associated with the program's implementation. The APD's regional network, which includes members of the security apparatus, local leaders, and government officials, as well as its cross-border relationship with Puntland-based civil society organizations, have all contributed to the averting of those possible threats.

6.2. Recommendations

a) Ensuring that the peace agreements are put into effect

It is necessary to put into effect the inter-clan peace accord brokered by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) as well as the peace mediation committees that were established jointly by the two conflicting clans in the first peace conference. The implementation of the peace agreement is extremely important for the prevention of renewed conflicts. In this regard, APD and its partners will provide logistical and technical assistance to the mediation Committee and the Ministry of the Interior in order to aid in the implementation of peace accords in the region. The first step is to re-engage with the Mediation Committee (which APD has already done) in order to obtain situational updates, identify potential areas of support and intervention, and consult with the Ministry of the Interior on the most effective way to provide assistance to the local communities. It is critical that the process of reconciliation and negotiation of the agreement's implementation be driven by local communities, rather than by the APD or the Ministry of Interior. As an operational strategy, APD always ensures that dispute resolution processes are exclusively managed, driven, and administered by local stakeholders. However, the disadvantage of a locally-driven process is that it has little influence over the timing and magnitude of accomplishments, a reality that APD and its partners must contend with.

b) Providing assistance in the collection and exchange of Diya (blood compensation money)

The first step towards implementation of the agreement should be the collection and payment of the Diya (which should cater both for those who have died and those who were injured). This should be paid) to the relatives of the victims of both contending sides. The collection and payment of Diya (21 dead individuals multiplied by 100 camels with a monetary value of \$500 and 60 wounded) thus remains to be the most difficult task in implementing the agreement. This is because clans would be

unable to pay their share of the Diya due to the current circumstances, in which livestock output has decreased as a result of the prolonged drought that has lasted for several years. To avoid this from occurring, APD would give logistical and technical support to the neutral mediation committees. By providing a small amount of assistance, the mediation committee will be able to travel long distances to retrieve Diya.

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