

Conflict Assessment, Galmudug State

An Analysis of Local Perspectives

Abass Kassim Sheikh, Janel B. Galvanek & Pascal Grimm

Executive Summary

From 6 to 23 July 2019, the Berghof Foundation conducted a field mission to Galmudug State, Somalia. The objective was to understand local conflicts, their root causes and their impact on the people of Galmudug. The research team convened interviews with representatives of all societal groups in the regional towns of Dhusamareb, Galkayo, Adado, Abudwaq and the national capital Mogadishu.

The most common cause of conflict in Galmudug is disputes over land ownership and borders, where the lack of both ownership documents and proper demarcation lead to land claims from different community members. Similar conflicts can arise from disputes over water and grazing land, especially during the drought season, when tensions between the different clans increase. In all four districts visited in Galmudug State, the interviewees also mentioned revenge attacks as a chronic cause of conflict. These often have their roots many years in the past. Revenge attacks have become an unfortunate norm within the communities.

Another form of conflict, although less often violent, is politically motivated. Since the formation of Galmudug State in 2015, the increased competition for power and influence has led to clan disputes. Mistrust among the clans is high and many politicians take advantage of this for their own benefit. For some, the situation worsened with the agreement between Galmudug President Haaf and Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) and the move of the regional parliament from Adado to Dhusamareb. Weak government structures, ineffective institutions, poverty, unemployment and a lack of education exacerbate these conflicts. The people most affected by violent conflict in Galmudug State are the civilians. Loss of life, internal displacement and loss of livelihoods and property are only some of the major effects. Additionally, conflict spreads hate and animosity among the communities of the state.

People across all regions mentioned politicians and the business community as primary drivers of conflict. Otherwise, the perspectives on conflict actors varied from region to region and between different societal groups. Traditional elders and religious leaders are seen by most interviewees as the primary peacemakers in Galmudug State, but youth groups in particular pointed out the ambivalent role that elders can play in clan conflicts. However, most interviewees still see traditional elders as the group that is primarily responsible for leading conflict resolution initiatives. Thus the Xeer system continues to play a very important role in Galmudug society, but its weaknesses – such as a lack of comprehensiveness and effectiveness – were also pointed out. Especially youth and women’s groups emphasize their own (potential) role in awareness-raising campaigns and reconciliation activities. This was confirmed by respondents from other societal groups across the regions who value the complementary role that youth and women can additionally bring to conflict resolution.

While politicians, elders and the business community mainly perceive political processes as inclusive and open for everyone, youth and especially women pointed out that they are often sidelined. The 4.5 system is seen negatively among all groups interviewed. The same negative opinion applies to federalism as well, although many also emphasized the people’s lack of understanding on what federalism actually implies.

Many interviewees emphasized the need for more frequent and comprehensive reconciliation activities. Currently, a lack of funding is one of the biggest challenges for reconciliation activities, followed by the lack of security, a weak government administration and, in some cases, a lack of will to reconcile. In order for successful reconciliation to take place, there is a need for dialogue, stronger governmental institutions, the empowerment of community peacemakers through capacity and skills development and awareness-raising campaigns within the communities.

Acknowledgements

This report is only possible thanks to the field research team – Abass Kassim Sheikh, Sharif Abukar Ahmed, Mohamed Hassan, Zainab Mohamed and Mohamud Hassan Abdi. We would also like to thank the Minister of Reconciliation and Federal Affairs in Galmudug State, Mr. Saleh A. Mohamed, as well Mr. Abdi Kafi, Galmudug Minister of Planning, and Mr. Mohamud Mohamed Samatar “Duran”, Galmudug Minister of the Interior, all of whom greatly assisted the field research team in July 2019. Furthermore, we are greatly appreciative of our project partner, the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, for their valuable advice and assistance with the research. Lastly, we send a special thank you to the many interview partners in Galmudug State who took the time and effort to meet and share their views with the research team. This research has been generously funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Methodology	5
Limitations and Challenges of the Study	6
Key Findings	6
1. Types and Causes of Local Conflicts in Galmudug.....	6
1.1 Conflict over Land Ownership.....	6
1.2. Resource-based Conflict.....	7
1.3. Revenge-motivated Conflict.....	8
1.4. Politically-motivated Conflict	9
1.5. Further Causes of Conflict	9
2. Effects of Conflict.....	10
3. Actors in Conflict and Peace in Galmudug.....	11
4. Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution in Galmudug.....	12
5. Political Participation and Power-sharing Clan Formulas in Galmudug.....	13
6. Perspectives on Federalism.....	14
7. Challenges and Needs for Reconciliation in Galmudug State	15
7.1. Challenges of Reconciliation	15
7.2. Needs for Reconciliation.....	16
Conclusion and Policy Recommendations	17

List of Abbreviations

ASWJ	Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member State(s)
MP	Member of Parliament

Introduction

The Somali state of Galmudug, situated northwest of the nation's capital Mogadishu, resulted from the merger of the two regions Galgadud and Mudug in 2015. The merger process was a painful undertaking, and although the 11 clans of Galmudug¹ ultimately reached an understanding with regard to power sharing, the state and its clans have remained polarized. Notably, the armed Sufi group Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) refused to join the Galmudug administration and remained outside of the governance structure. That changed in December 2017, when ASWJ signed a power-sharing deal with Galmudug State, represented by Galmudug President Ahmed Duale Gelle "Haaf". The agreement was intended to harmonize the parallel governance institutions, the constitutions and the security forces under the Galmudug administration, which was to be joined by ASWJ authorities. However, in the end, the power-sharing agreement exacerbated the divisions in the leadership of Galmudug State, specifically between the president and vice-president, Mohamed Hashi Abdi, and created a new power struggle between Dhusamareb and Adado.

The implementation of a federal System in Somalia, beginning in 2012, has thus brought with it an entirely new level of conflict to a region that already had its fair share of conflict in the past. The questions of fair power sharing and the move of the regional parliament to the Dhusamareb that happened after the signing of the agreement in 2017 have exacerbated old conflicts and started new ones among the various clans of Galmudug. However, the ongoing political conflict for power and influence between ASWJ and other political groups are only the most obvious of conflicts that affect Galmudug State and its people. Many other grievances, concerns and fears exist in the communities and are interlinked with each other.

In order to understand the complexity of some of this ongoing conflict, one needs to listen to the people who are directly affected by conflict and to consider their unique perspectives. The Berghof Foundation conducted research in Galmudug State with the objective of speaking with members of all societal groups in various locations, in order to better understand the challenges and needs of the people of

¹ According to the power-sharing arrangements used in Galmudug, there are 11 clans: Saleban, Sa'ad, Ayr, Duduble, Marehan, Murursade, Dir, Surur, Wa'esle, Shekhaal and several smaller clans (Madhibaan, Tumaal, Haskul) which together equal one clan. This 11-clan arrangement is highly controversial in the state, as some of the clans are opposed to it. These clans believe that the arrangement serves the interest of a few powerful clans.

Galmudug. The information gathered was then analyzed according to location and societal groups interviewed, so as to have a comprehensive picture of conflict in the state. This report is a summary of our findings.

Methodology

This study investigated the nature and dynamics of conflicts in Galmudug State. The assessment examined the various conflicts that exist in the state and the key actors that play a central role in these conflicts. The assessment also examined the conflict resolution mechanisms that are used to resolve local conflicts in Galmudug State, and the actors that play an important role in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes. Furthermore, we examined opinions and attitudes on topics such as federalism, the 4.5 system and overall political participation in Galmudug State. Lastly, the study investigated the various challenges to conflict resolution and reconciliation processes as well as the urgent needs of the citizens of Galmudug State with regard to peace and conflict.

The study employed qualitative research methods, specifically focus group discussions and key informant interviews, which allowed the participants to express, in detail, their thoughts about the conflicts in their region. Focus group discussions were held with various societal groups, including community elders, religious leaders, business leaders, women's groups, youth groups, and members of civil society groups, while key informant interviews were held with key stakeholders in Galmudug, both governmental and non-governmental. They included district commissioners, mayors, key ministers in the Galmudug administration, politicians such as regional and federal MPs, and members of civil society such as journalists and intellectuals. In total 187 people were interviewed between 6 July and 23 July 2019: 40 community elders, 40 women, 41 youth (both women and men), 32 people from the business community, 25 civil society actors and/or professionals (teachers, professors, etc.) and 9 government officials.

The assessment was conducted in four geographically diverse districts within Galmudug state – Dhusamareb, Galkayo, Adado, Abudwaq. Galmudug actors currently living in Mogadishu were also interviewed in order to get a better understanding of the perceptions and realities of the conflicts that exist in the state. The locations were selected based on the ability to reach members of all 11 clans of Galmudug from these locations and the prevalence of local conflicts in the districts and their surroundings. The locations were selected after extensive consultations with the Galmudug administration and our project partners.

Prior to the fieldwork, the Berghof Foundation's five-person field research team received training on research methodology and ethical guidelines that should be considered during the fieldwork. The team also reviewed and practiced the planned interview questions. The questions were later translated into Somali for the target groups in order to elicit better participation in the process.

Limitations and Challenges of the Study

The main limitations and challenges faced during data collection included the following:

- ≡ **Cancelled interview appointments:** In some districts, some expected interviewees postponed and unfortunately cancelled the scheduled appointments, which inconvenienced the research team.
- ≡ **Insecurity:** There were attacks and assassinations that took place in some of the districts where interviews were being held, which led to a heightened level of fear and anxiety.
- ≡ **Length of the discussions:** Due to the scope of the assessment, some of the interviews took longer than anticipated, which caused some of the interviewees to become impatient and end the interviews. In such cases, the researchers focused on the most important questions.

Key Findings

1. Types and Causes of Local Conflicts in Galmudug

Conflict in the four districts visited during the field research in Galmudug State generally occurs over the ownership of land, land demarcations, competition for scarce resources such as water or grazing land, revenge killings, and disagreements arising from power, resource sharing, or clan dominancy in the region. In all the locations visited during the assessment, the discussants revealed that the conflicts often start from disagreements between individuals over an issue and later escalate to the clan level where clan kinsmen intervene to assist their fellow clan members. The conflicts further escalate to violence through the involvement of clan militia groups (who act and fight on the frontline on behalf of their clan members) and through the financial and material contributions made by other clan members. The involvement of these parties is often seen as a communal responsibility to protect clan supremacy within society. The following types of conflicts were emphasized by the respondents during the conflict assessment:

1.1 Conflict over Land Ownership

In each of the four locations visited, the assessment revealed that the most common cause of conflict is disputes over land ownership and borders. Due to the lack of ownership documents and proper demarcation of land in the region, some community members may claim ownership of the same land, others seek to expand their territory, while others fight over land borders, thus sparking clan-related violent conflict. According to many respondents, land-related conflicts have been happening in Galmudug for many years, and it has become the norm for communities to claim the same land or seek to

expand their territory and thus widen their sphere of influence. However, it is important to note that most of these conflicts happen in the outskirts of villages surrounding the four major towns visited during the assessment.

A senior government official interviewed held the view that the competition for land ownership can be attributed to the widely held belief that the more land a clan or community owns, the greater its bargaining power in the power-sharing sphere. This makes competition over land a common trend among the communities that reside in Galmudug.

The following are examples of some of the land-related conflicts across Galmudug State²:

- ≡ In Galkayo district, the discussants frequently mentioned a conflict between the Rer Nim'aale sub clan of the Sa'ad-Habargidir clan and the Suleman Abdalla sub clan of the Sure-Dir clan in Af Barwaqo and Tawfiq villages (8 kilometers apart) over the ownership of land. This conflict started in 2003, leading to the death of many people, the displacement of many others and the destruction of property. There is potential for the conflict to arise again.
- ≡ In Dhusamareb district, a conflict emerged recently between the Duduble clan and the Absiye sub clan of the Eyr-Habargidir clan in Bula'ale village over the settlement of land. The clashes started when some people from the Duduble clan settled in Bula'ale village, which is dominated by the Absiye clan. These clashes caused the death of 14 people and the displacement of many others. In retaliation, some people from the Duduble clan attacked a beekeeping business owned by a man from the Absiye clan in a nearby village and killed people from the Rahanweyn clan – who happened to be on the premises at the time of the attack, mistaking them to be from the Eyr-Absiye clan. This attack escalated the conflict further.

1.2. Resource-based Conflict

Somalis are traditionally livestock-keeping nomadic communities and are known for moving from one area to another in search of water and pasture, especially during drought season, and the sharing of resources is a common practice among clans in Somali society. However, despite the various resource-sharing arrangements, resource-based conflicts are quite common in Galmudug State, when communities try to access scarce resources such as water and grazing land for survival.³ This results in violent clashes among clans and sub-clans in the state. In Galmudug, most resource-based conflicts arise when members of one clan are welcomed by another clan to utilize water and pasture on a temporary basis. The visiting clan then often breaks the agreement and settles in the area permanently by drilling a water well. The drilling of a well generally indicates intention of permanent residency and this often

² The information in this report concerning the specific conflicts was gathered in July 2019 and was the status of the conflict at that time. The conflicts may have since changed following the data collection.

³ Since the most serious and violent conflicts (over land and resources) generally arise between nomadic communities, we placed more emphasis in the report on these types of conflicts, rather than on conflicts that occur within the urban centers of Galmudug.

results in violent clashes and the eviction of the visiting clan from the area. Below are examples of resource-based conflicts that have happened in the state of Galmudug in recent years:⁴

- ≡ In Galkayo district, a conflict broke out between the Rer Jalaf sub clan of the Sa'ad-Habargidir clan and the Wagardhac sub clan of the Marehan clan in the Somalia-Ethiopia border village of Kahan-dale over competition for water resources. Clashes erupted when people from the Rer Jalaf clan wanted to utilize a water well owned by someone from the Wagardhac clan without his consent, thus leading to clashes and the death of 35 people.
- ≡ A conflict in Galinsor erupted between two men of the Marehan and Habargidir clans, which later escalated to violence at clan level. The source of the conflict was competition over a particular water resource, and the conflict has caused the death of several people, displacement and the destruction of property.

1.3. Revenge-motivated Conflict

Conflict caused by revenge attacks were identified as a chronic cause of conflict in all four locations visited in Galmudug. With the exception of a few respondents in Galkayo district, the overwhelming majority of the respondents in the five locations revealed that revenge-motivated conflicts were common in their district. This problem dates back to many years in Mudug and Galgaduud regions, and has unfortunately become a norm within the communities of the regions.

Due to deep-seated grievances resulting from past incidents, some members of the communities, especially immediate family members such as the sons and the brothers of the victims, bear the responsibility to revenge the family member who was killed. In some clans, it is a shame not to seek blood revenge for victims. This encourages individuals to wage attacks, which lead to cycles of killings and clashes, thus making the resolution of the conflict extremely complicated. An interviewee in Adado district stated that the community encourages individuals to revenge for their family members who have been killed, raped or maimed in previous conflicts years back:

“... sons of the victims are encouraged to revenge for their father or mother who probably was killed 20 or 30 years ago and as a result conflict is reignited”.

In some cases, communities pursue ‘value killing’ where an innocent person of equal value is targeted regardless of his connection to the conflict.

The majority of the discussants and the interviewees indicated revenge attacks to be a serious problem in the state that needs urgent attention, as conflicts are reignited whenever revenge attacks happen. These killings have a significant impact on the communities beyond the killing of people, as people caught up in these cycles may be unable to move freely or work due to fear of retaliatory attacks. This was highlighted by a senior official within the Galmudug administration:

⁴ The information in this report concerning the specific conflicts was gathered in July 2019 and was the status of the conflict at that time. The conflicts may have since changed following the data collection.

'...I am unable to move freely in the town because I may be targeted for a crime that was committed by my fellow clan members. Therefore I have to be careful'.

1.4. Politically-motivated Conflict

Though there has been no politically-motivated violent conflict in the state in the recent past, all the discussants and interviewees held the view that politics (e.g. competition for power and resources among the political actors and clans) is the source of much division and animosity among the communities in Galmudug. Since the contentious formation of Galmudug State in 2015 in Adado district, this competition has been heightened, each party seeking to get the biggest share of the power and resources. According to the interviewees, this has led to each clan/community blaming the others for accumulating power and resources at the expense of the other clans/communities.

For many discussants, the political dynamics in Galmudug took a dramatic turn when the Galmudug regional administration led by President Haaf entered into an agreement with ASWJ in Djibouti in December 2017 to form an inclusive administration in Galmudug. The issues agreed in the talks, such as the capital city of the state and the home of parliament, further complicated the political dynamics. For example, communities in Adado district claim that the parliament, which was initially based in their town, was moved to the Dhusamareb without consulting with them. During his visit to the region in January 2018, President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo promised the communities in Adado that the parliament was going to be based in their town, contrary to the agreement in Djibouti. According to the interviews in Adado district, the community's feeling of betrayal was exacerbated by the federal government's recent agreement with ASWJ, which institutionalized the relocation of the parliament to Dhusamareb district.

Furthermore, due to grievances arising from competition for power and resources, some discussants in Abudwaq and Adado districts believe that Dhusamareb, currently the capital city of Galmudug, is not accessible to many communities outside of Dhusamareb. Some communities in Abudwaq district argued that they, together with other communities, especially those in Hurshe district, do not feel welcome in the capital city due to perceived grievances against the ASWJ administration. According to this group, the communities in Hurshe accuse ASWJ for supporting the rival Herale community. These same people in Abudwaq district argued that there is a need for genuine reconciliation between them and the communities in Dhusamareb – especially ASWJ – in order for them to access the capital city freely.

1.5. Further Causes of Conflict

Conflict in Galmudug is also inherently connected to weak governance structures and the lack of effective institutions to enforce law and order. Since government institutions were destroyed during the civil war, the country has lacked the effective institutional capacity to resolve conflict and deal with its aftermath. Respondents such as religious leaders and community elders, as well as government actors in several districts mentioned this lack of capacity on the part of the government to implement the

agreements reached during mediation processes. One interviewee in Adado noted that if the government agencies' capacity to deal with conflicts were increased, they could halt conflict before it escalates to violence:

“...recently Danab security forces reconciled two communities by burying a water well which was the source of the conflict between the communities.... To me, this was the best solution to the conflict, because when conflicting parties see the presence of security forces who can enforce law and order in their area, they stop fighting”.

Poverty and unemployment among the youth were also identified as a cause for conflict by a number of discussants in Galkayo, Dhusamareb, Adado and Mogadishu districts, including regional and federal MPs in Galkayo and Mogadishu. Respondents such as religious leaders and youth in several districts also held a similar view. According to a political analyst in Adado district, the absence of employment opportunities in the region have created a situation of hopelessness among the youth, thus making them vulnerable to joining militia groups.

Tribalism and the creation of clan militia groups to protect clan interests have also contributed to the occurrence of violent conflicts in Galmudug. Many discussants argued that in order to protect the superiority of their clans within society, clan members create militia groups who will fight on behalf of other clan members during conflict. According to many respondents, this increases conflict and competition overall among clans.

2. Effects of Conflict

As with every violent conflict, the civilians bear the brunt of the conflicts in Galmudug. According to the majority of the discussants in all five of the locations visited, the conflicts have had a tremendous effect on local residents, including loss of life, displacement of people, loss of livelihoods and loss of property. The discussants frequently mentioned killings, maiming of people and displacement as the common effects of conflict, with women and children being the most affected members of the community, as mentioned specifically by the women's groups in several districts.

Additionally, certain interviewees such as regional MPs and officials from the Galmudug administration, as well as youth and religious leaders noted that local conflicts have caused hatred and animosity among the communities of the warring factions due to the death and destruction caused during conflict. Several other local conflicts also affect the local economy of the districts where the conflicts take place; this is often the case when supply of commodities to local markets are affected by conflict.

According to interviewees in Adado and Galkayo districts, the effects of conflict are heavily dependent on the kind of weapons used during conflict. They believe that when weapons like machine guns are used, it causes much destruction and loss of life. However, it is important to note that land and resource-based conflicts and revenge-motivated conflicts tend to be more violent than politically-motivated conflicts.

3. Actors in Conflict and Peace in Galmudug

The current situation in Galmudug with regard to conflict and peace is very complex – as many of the people in the four locations rightfully pointed out during the field mission. Different individuals and societal groups are often involved, either as drivers of conflict or (potential) peacemakers, or as both. The interviewees were asked about their opinion of who they perceive to be primary actors in conflict. They were also asked about who could play a decisive role in the resolution of conflict. When questioned about the drivers of conflict in their regions, differences in perception can be seen in all four locations. What became clear in the discussions on this topic is the lack of trust and deep cleavages that exist among the societal groups in Galmudug. Blame for conflict is often placed on other groups with little recognition of the role that one's own group plays. This fragmentation was noticeable in all locations.

Politicians were repeatedly mentioned throughout all towns and by many respondents as one of the key drivers of conflict. In order to gain political influence and recognition, some fund conflicts and mobilize their respective clans. Many are seen as corrupt and as people who chase their own interests and the interests of their clans – rather than the interests of the entire community.

The business community is seen as the second-biggest driver of conflict in Galmudug after the politicians. Many people, especially youth and political representatives throughout the region, mentioned that some businesspeople ignite conflicts in order to profit financially from them – be it through the selling of weapons and food items or because general food prices increase during times of conflict. However, they were also frequently mentioned as important actors in reconciliation activities, since representatives from the business community also fund conferences and security for such activities. Without such funding, such activities would often not be possible.

Most of the interviewees perceive ASWJ as a key actor in Galmudug. However, the opinions about the group's role in conflict vary strongly throughout the region. Especially in Adado and Galkayo, ASWJ is seen as a main driver of conflict. Most of the people questioned in Adado mentioned them first when asked about spoilers of peace and some even complained that their people were being “hijacked” by ASWJ in Dhusamareb. ASWJ is often perceived as power-hungry and as an organization that hides their clan-interest behind a religious façade.

Elders and religious leaders are seen by respondents from most societal groups as the moral authorities in the community. As such, they traditionally have a lot of power and influence, which they can use to promote either conflict or peace. Both elders and religious leaders were mentioned most often as leading actors in conflict resolution and reconciliation activities. Many interviewees from all societal groups emphasized the important role of elders in the Xeer system. However, traditional elders can also fuel conflicts and encourage their clan members to fight. Especially youth groups seem skeptical of the moral authority of some traditional elders and repeatedly mentioned them as potential drivers of conflict.

It was pointed out by some respondents – especially the women – that youth are primary actors in conflict as they are the ones who mainly do the fighting. Many people felt that young people without jobs and perspectives can be easily persuaded to take up arms against each other. However, many respondents also recognized the youth's potential in conflict resolution and reconciliation activities.

The youth groups themselves emphasized the role they can play – or already play – in reconciliation activities. Active and motivated youth play an important role in raising awareness and in persuading their peers to stop fighting. They also strive for more youth inclusion, political participation, and social cohesion between communities.

Women were barely mentioned as drivers of conflict but many people pointed out the role that they can play in mobilizing for peace and reconciliation activities. Women themselves, similar to the youth groups, often emphasized the important role that they can and should be playing in conflict situations and advocated for more space to do so. One last societal group mentioned sometimes as a driver of conflict is poets, who traditionally have an important place in Somali culture. However, those interviewees who mentioned poets also added that their influence has declined in recent years.

4. Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution in Galmudug

When asked about existing mechanisms of conflict resolution, the traditional legal system in Somalia employed by the elders – the Xeer system⁵ – was constantly mentioned throughout the region. In this system, the elders of the various clans play a key role and nearly everyone asked in the four locations acknowledged that traditional elders do indeed play a leading role in conflict resolution in their communities. They are chosen as judges because of their knowledge and wisdom. Most of the interviewees – even the youth groups – still see the community elders as the ones to lead conflict resolution initiatives. In the case of conflict between two different clans, the elders of a neighboring clan can sometimes intervene as a third party and try to resolve the conflict.

Nevertheless, some of the groups asked pointed out that the Xeer system does not always work effectively and is not comprehensive enough, as it does not, for example, apply between wider clans and it does not address the root causes of conflicts. While all groups of elders in all locations emphasized their own role in reconciliation activities, some of them also pointed out that the Xeer works for conflicts between sub clans but that there are currently no reconciliation mechanisms for conflict between wider clans. All Xeer laws and principles derive from oral telling throughout generations and different clans therefore have different inherited laws and principles that do not always apply to other clans.

Especially the youth groups argued against the Xeer system in its current form. One youth group pointed out the need for a unified Xeer system throughout Galmudug so that it can properly resolve conflicts in the region, while another explained that some elders currently use the Xeer system for their own financial benefit and are thus one of the main drivers of conflict. Yet regardless of one's opinion on the Xeer system, many discussants were clear about the fact that the initiatives carried out by community elders and religious leaders to manage and resolve conflicts have not been sufficient to transform conflict, thus leaving many conflicts unresolved and thus re-emerging. One reason why the efforts

⁵ The traditional conflict management system in Somalia is known as *Xeer*. Community elders are the main actors in this system and dispense swift and inexpensive legal solutions to the communities. This traditional system is widely recognized as a code of conduct for settling disputes and keeping the peace between clans and between members of the communities.

of the traditional elders/religious leaders have not been sufficient to resolve conflict may be that the root causes of the conflict are not addressed, but rather the elders use Somali and Islamic culture to encourage people to forgive each other. While many people, including elders, pointed out the important and active role of youth and women with regard to conflict resolution, these actors are generally not invited to traditional reconciliation meetings and conferences, which are exclusively led by traditional elders. In sum, the hierarchy in conflict resolution mechanisms seems quite clear for most: The elders are expected to lead the activities while all other groups are there to assist them where needed – mainly through awareness raising (youth and women) or funding (business community).

Furthermore, the escalation of violent conflict in Galmudug State can be attributed to the absence of effective mechanisms to address the root causes of the conflicts. According to the youth discussants in several locations, as well as some government officials, there are no effective district peace committees in Galmudug State and the traditional elders who lead the conflict resolution processes lack the capacity to address the root causes. Some youth discussants also complained about the general lack of knowledge and skills by members of the Somali communities to resolve conflict. Some youth, as well as federal and regional member of parliaments, also attributed the escalation of conflict to the proliferation of arms in the region and the weak capacity of the regional administration to implement the agreements reached during mediation processes. Many interviewees emphasized the need for more frequent and more comprehensive reconciliation activities and strengthened governmental institutions. Lastly, several interviewees noted that conflicts erupt among communities due to a lack of mechanisms that raise awareness on the need to live peacefully as neighbors and share resources equally.

5. Political Participation and Power Sharing in Galmudug

When asked about the possibilities for political participation in Galmudug, people gave very different answers. Politicians, elders and business people mostly stated that the political processes are inclusive and open for everyone while youth and women groups often pointed out that they are being sidelined from political processes. Especially women's groups emphasized that they are treated as a minority and that they must actively push for their rights in order to be heard. The 25 per cent representation of women in political positions should only be the beginning and women need to use the current momentum to strive for full equality in the political system. One youth group confirmed that especially women are not encouraged to participate in politics, even when there are no written laws hindering them from applying for political positions.

With regard to the 4.5 formula⁶ for power sharing and whether it is a viable system or not, this question elicited a strong and uniformed response from the interviewees. In all locations and among all respondents, there was not a single positive statement about the 4.5 system. On the contrary, the majority of the statements were quite negative. Many different people from all groups in society lamented the fact

⁶ The 4.5 formula is a system of fixed proportional representation of Somali clans. An equal number of places is allotted to each of the four major Somali clan-families, and a half place to minorities and to women. This formula has been used to determine the representation in the various peace conferences that have taken place over the years as well as for transitional governments, and it is still in use today. There remains a reliance on the 4.5 formula for political power sharing at various levels of government despite widespread objections to the formula in society.

that the 4.5 system is still in use after all these years, even though it was only supposed to be a temporary solution. The more pragmatic of these people said it was indeed a “solution at the time”, and it must be used until a better alternative is found. Yet others say it was never a good solution and openly question why it is still in use all these years later.

The people of Galmudug clearly see the 4.5 system as unjust. They would welcome an alternative to the system. Some people from various groups mentioned the “one-person, one vote” system as an alternative, although there is little expectation that this will be implemented soon. Many of the respondents – in particular elders, women and youth – feel that the 4.5 formula is dividing the Somalia people “as never before” and separating them into different communities. Furthermore, people were clearly unhappy with the fact that this system refers to people as “others”, leaving some groups behind, “demoralizing” them or “eclipsing their political participation.” In this sense, some respondents felt that the system was un-Islamic and against Somali culture.

Quite a few respondents, particularly in the government and in the business community, stated that the 4.5 system is not applicable to Galmudug, and instead the 11-clan system is used in the state. The 11-clan system was frequently mentioned as a system that guarantees that every clan is well represented in Galmudug State and that certain posts are reserved for certain clans. Yet many of the interviewees see this system not as an ideal solution, but rather as a pragmatic solution that needs to be in place until a better alternative has been found. Many people place high hopes in the “one-person one-vote” system as well as a multi-party-system, which may be carried out in 2021. The people of Adado specifically see themselves highly disrespected in the current political system in Galmudug and feel that they have been suppressed by other actors. Although the 11-clan-system in theory makes sure that all clans are represented, many feel that the strong clans dominate the minority clans and in practice some seats are open to only the most powerful and influential clans.

6. Perspectives on Federalism

Similar to the responses about the 4.5 formula, the people of Galmudug who were interviewed were mainly negative with regard to federalism and its top-down implementation in their country. Many different people say that the federal system in Somalia has divided the Somali people among clan lines. Among other consequences, the people felt that this has led to states being dominated by certain clans. This, in turn, has led to a situation that limits the freedom of movement in Somalia, as certain clans must remain in certain states and would not necessarily be welcomed elsewhere.

The most common response with regard to federalism was that there is a significant lack of understanding about the concept of federalism. Many of those interviewed felt that people generally do not understand federalism and more awareness and education is needed. One women’s group felt that federalism as such was actually a good thing, but that Somalis have been interpreting it wrong and this has led to a lot of confusion. Many respondents, particularly the youth in the districts visited, felt that the implementation of federalism has led to conflict between the federal member states (FMS) and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). The roles and responsibilities between the FMS and the FGS are not clear, and there is too much competition and unnecessary fighting.

Lastly, a great deal of respondents felt that federalism was not applicable to Somalia – as it was intended for countries with many different people and Somalis all share the same language and culture – or they felt that the concept was forced upon them (by foreigners) without having any say in the matter. Several people advocated for a strong, unitary system. It is highly interesting to note that the negative feelings towards federalism in Somalia were mentioned by respondents across all societal groups without exception, and some of the strongest voices against federalism came from the government actors and the youth.

7. Challenges and Needs for Reconciliation in Galmudug State

7.1. Challenges of Reconciliation

In spite of the vast differences of opinion among citizens of the various towns in Galmudug State with regard to power sharing, the role of the federal government, perceived grievances and suggested solutions to the various conflicts, when it came to discussing the challenges of and needs for reconciliation, the responses across the geographical and demographic divides were markedly similar. It is clear that all citizens struggle with the same challenges and have the same urgent needs.

The challenge that was mentioned most often was the lack of funding or resources that are needed in order to carry out reconciliation initiatives. This can be understood as a lack of money for transport to the conflict hot spots or to be able to bring the conflict parties together. The three groups that mentioned this challenge the most was elders, government actors and the business community, which makes sense as it is often the elders and government who are called upon to act in situations of conflict, yet they often do not have the capacity to do so. Thus, the business community is then pressed upon to support the initiative financially.

The other challenge of reconciliation that was mentioned many times in each town is the overall lack of security and the fact that those groups or individuals who attempt to make peace are often put in danger. There is a very real threat of violence to peacemakers in Galmudug. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that people across Galmudug think that their security is generally good. Yet the threat to peacemakers seems to be genuine. It is also interesting to note that specifically the youth mentioned this challenge more than other groups, which may say something about the particular danger young people are in when they make efforts to encourage peace. For instance, one youth group in Galkayo explained how they were attacked at a checkpoint when they travelled to a place outside of town to speak to a militia group that had set up a checkpoint on the road to Adado.

This lack of security is intrinsically connected with the next most often mentioned challenge, which can be summarized as weak administration, rule of law and institutions. This was described in various ways by the respondents but denotes a severe lack of capacity on the part of the government to either react to conflict taking place, implement peace agreements or initiate any conflict resolution activities.

Interestingly, this challenge was mentioned much more often by the groups interviewed in Dhusamareb and Adado, rather than elsewhere, and there it was the youth and elders who mentioned it the most.

One last challenge that was mentioned by all respondents in all locations was the lack of compromise and/or the lack of will to reconcile. Unfortunately, the information given by those interviewed wasn't comprehensive enough to understand who exactly is perceived as not being willing to reconcile, but it is clear that these challenges lead to broken peace deals, as the outcomes of agreements are not respected. All of these challenges combined then lead to the re-emergence of conflicts in the sense that historical, unresolved conflicts are never dealt with comprehensively and satisfactorily and thus continue to cause problems.

Beyond these commonalities, the people of Galmudug had diverse perspectives on other challenges to reconciliation and on why the prevalence of conflict in Galmudug is so high. For some, it was related to the weaknesses of the conflict resolution mechanisms themselves – the Xeer system doesn't address the root causes of conflict or the compensation that families are required to pay is too high – while others related it to the lack of capacity and skills of the peacemakers themselves. For many others, the simple lack of trust that exists among individuals and communities in the state is one of the greatest challenges. Overall, a lack of education, the dire economic situation and the lack of equality and justice were other challenges that need to be overcome to make reconciliation possible.

7.2. Needs for Reconciliation

When the groups and individuals in Galmudug were asked their thoughts on the urgent needs to ensure genuine reconciliation in their state, the most common response and that which came with the most explanation was the need for dialogue. Respondents described this in different ways – “platforms to bring people together”, “opportunities for people to share their grievances”, “consultation among the people” – yet it was quite clear that one priority for all sectors of society was having a space where people could come together and talk to each other. This was mentioned in all towns in which interviews were carried out and by almost all of the different groups interviewed.

The next most often mentioned need for reconciliation was to strengthen the institutions of governance, including law enforcement, the justice system, and local administrations and to increase the capacity for key ministries. These issues were particularly relevant for business people, professionals and government actors/politicians in Dhusamareb and Adado.

Another issue that is extremely important for the citizens of Galmudug is the need to empower and increase the capacity of peacemakers in society. There does not seem to be any lack of individuals and groups willing to act for peace, but their skills could be enhanced. Moreover, the specific role that certain groups play – elders and peace committees, for instance – could be strengthened or made more visible. It is important to note here that this was mentioned by all societal groups and in all towns visited in Galmudug.

Equally as important as capacity building for peacemakers is the need for awareness raising in the communities – awareness about the consequences of conflict, the need for peaceful co-existence and

the opportunities for conflict resolution. Although mentioned by many groups, the women's groups and professionals were particularly enthusiastic about awareness raising, which may stem from the fact that they feel that this is something that they can and should take on in their communities and which they already spend their time doing to a certain extent.

The broader needs of education, development and job opportunities were mentioned to a great extent as well, although these needs are relevant for the overall development, statebuilding and peacebuilding processes in Somalia and are thus not unique needs for reconciliation. Nevertheless, it is clear that for many people of Galmudug, expecting genuine reconciliation to be successful is only wishful thinking if the economic situation and level of literacy continue to remain so low.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study investigated the opinions of Somalis in certain districts of Galmudug State on issues of conflict, in particular the actors involved in conflict and peacemaking, the mechanisms used to resolve conflict, the challenges to conflict resolution as well as the needs of the people with regard to reconciliation. The perceptions of the people on thematic matters such as the 4.5 system, federalism and political participation were also examined, in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics in the state. Although it was not possible to visit all locations in Galmudug, the authors nevertheless feel confident that due to the wide coverage of the study, the views in this report are representative of people living across the state. The analysis of this study has brought significant insight into a number of pressing issues in Galmudug State.

It is clear from the findings that conflict and its effects are having a tremendous impact on the people of Galmudug State. Death, displacement, and the loss of property are only the most visible effects of conflict. The detrimental effect that conflict has on the local economies and the ever-persistent fear and mistrust among communities and clans are further effects that the citizens of Galmudug must suffer through on a continual basis. Thus, there is great interest on the part of the people to definitively resolve ongoing conflict and prevent new conflict from breaking out. There are also a great many people willing and able to act as peacemakers and peacebuilders in Galmudug State, including women, youth, religious leaders, traditional elders, the business community and the administration. Yet these groups of people struggle to collectively or individually resolve conflict due to a lack of resources and capacity across the state.

In order to provide the current and potential peacebuilders of Galmudug State a context more conducive to resolving conflict and ensuring reconciliation among communities, and to allow the various actors to collaborate with each other for successful and sustainable conflict resolution, the Berghof Foundation makes the following recommendations:

- ≡ The citizens of Galmudug must be provided with more opportunities to discuss with each other and enter into dialogue on certain issues. This could take the form of formal or informal reconciliation

initiatives, consultations between the administration and the citizens, or simple meetings that allow people to share their perspectives and opinions with each other. These **spaces for dialogue** can be facilitated by the Galmudug administration, civil society organizations or the community itself. Without an opportunity to discuss urgent matters with each other in a respectful environment, violent conflict can easily escalate.

- ≡ It is essential to build the **institutional capacity** of the Galmudug State administration to react timely to conflict, to definitely resolve conflict, and to implement and monitor agreements that are reached during mediation or reconciliation processes. To this end, the political actors in the state urgently need to come to an understanding on power-sharing (including quotas for minority clans and women) that is based on inclusive dialogue so that a working administration can be established and respected by all actors in Galmudug. Then, more investment must be made into the justice and security sectors, as well as the Ministry of Reconciliation and Federal Affairs.
- ≡ The **root causes of the conflict(s)** in Galmudug State must be more effectively and comprehensively addressed – rather than focusing only on stopping the violence – in order to prevent the frequent reoccurrence of the same conflict. As the majority of violent conflict in Galmudug is related to land and/or resources, addressing the root causes entails ensuring better **land management policy and regulations** on the part of the Galmudug administration. This includes providing better documentation for land ownership and boundary lines, creating transparent regulation for grazing rights, particularly between host and guest communities in times of drought, and providing an official space for mediation between conflict parties.
- ≡ The **skills of the individual peacebuilders** as well as the **capacity of the mechanisms** to resolve conflict must be built upon and further enriched. This could be done through working more closely with the people already active for peace, conducting trainings and workshops on mediation and conflict resolution techniques, as well as encouraging more formal collaboration between the administration and individual peacemakers with regard to resolving conflict, such as traditional elders and youth groups with the relevant ministries.
- ≡ Campaigns that **raise awareness** on the effects of conflict should be encouraged, most specifically those that address the high instance of **revenge killings** that happen in Galmudug State. Revenge killing is a persistent problem that has historical and cultural roots and must be addressed comprehensively, with the support of various actors in the state, including religious leaders, traditional elders and youth.
- ≡ More information must be provided to the citizens of Galmudug on **federalism** and its ongoing implementation in Somalia. The government should provide civic education on these matters and conduct wide consultations with communities as part of the federalization process. This will ensure increased comprehension of both the system of governance that the people live within and how local governance structures should function.