

A large crowd of people, likely at a conference or meeting, with text overlaid on the image. The people are mostly men, some wearing traditional headwear like white caps. The setting appears to be an indoor hall or auditorium with bright overhead lights.

Somalia: Challenges and Opportunities in Peace-building

Center for Policy Analysis
(CFPAR)

Somalia

Challenges and Opportunities in Peace-building

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the civil war in 1978 or 1991, depending on who is asked, Somalis have experienced violence and conflict that have overtime paralyzed the country and seen the death of hundreds of thousands of Somalis. The country has come to be known as the land of high sea piracy and terrorism by the international community. Plunging into a state of political chaos after 1991, Somalia's state system disintegrated, eventually to the point of anarchy, when the country became recognized in the international community as being stateless.

With the collapse of the central government and a blanket escalation in conflict and violence, several conferences have been held as an attempt to bring peace and reconciliation to Somalia. However, with at least twelve reconciliation conferences held between the years 1991 to 1997, peace and a national government have been evasive in Somalia. Factors that have contributed to the failure of those reconciliation conferences are yet to be addressed comprehensively. Hence, in the face of the ongoing peace building process for Somalia, an investigation into why previous reconciliation talks have failed, with an eye on the current situation is necessary.

This report will therefore examine Somalia's peace-building process, with the aim of delineating the challenges faced by the ongoing peace building process and how they might hinder the creation of a wholly integrated Somali state that is capable of enforcing the rule of law. This report will first briefly discuss the country and its demographics, and thereafter will address the background of the problems that might have a direct relationship to the condition that Somalia is currently going through. The discussion will then focus on the need for the peace building, and the challenges that come with it. Finally, this report will examine the possible way forward for Somalia with some recommendations to achieving peace that is a prerequisite for governance and state institutions.

Somalia: Population and Geography

Somalia, a country located in the Horn of Africa and previously referred to as Somali Democratic Republic –or Jamhuuriyadda Dimuqraadiga Soomaaliya in the Somali language –but now called the Federal Republic of Somalia, is home to so an estimated 10.8 million people – an approximation based on the country's last official census of 1975 – the vast majority of which are the Cushitic people called Somalis, and with a minority population of Bantus. The country even though having a recognizable minority presence is nevertheless considered to be a homogenous society in terms of its language, culture and religion. However, within the Somalia society, lineage justifies the basis for the divisions into clans and sub-clans of Somalis. Major clans, such as Hawiye, Daarod, Rahanweyn (Digil and Mirifle) and Dir are claimed that they constitute the Somali people.

Geographically, Somalia is situated in a strategic location along the Gulf of Aden that connects to the Red Sea, which leads to the Suez Canal that is the route for the most commercial shipping to and from Africa. Moreover, having the second longest coastline on the African continent, Somalia is bordered to the east by the Indian Ocean, to the west by Ethiopia, to the north by the Gulf of Aden, to the southwest by Kenya and to the northwest by Djibouti. European powers seeking access to the Suez Canal that led to the Indian Ocean became interested in Somalia

around the year 1839. Thus, when the major European powers Scramble for Africa began in the late 19th century, Somalia like many other African countries was affected by the Berlin Conference, where imaginary lines that demarcated Africa into colonies or protectorates without any regard for the geography and ethnic composition of African territories was completed¹. In the aftermath of the Berlin Conference, Somalia was divided not only physically, but also socially by the western powers of British, Italy and France. In the discussion of Somalia's history, colonial powers, Britain, France and Italy unknotted the existing traditional alliances by introducing new forms of competition among social groups, principalities and kingdoms². The problems that Somalia faces today, according to many scholars, have something to do with the colonial powers whether it is clan struggle for power and resources among Somalis or the imaginary border lines that Somalia shares with the neighboring countries, Kenya and Ethiopia. Nevertheless, after the formation of the Somali nation-state, conflicts about border issue with Ethiopia unfolded in the early 1960s.

During the period of the colonial rule, various anti-colonial movements gained strength, and the most important of which was that led by Mahammad Abdille Hassan (referred to by the Great Britain as Mad Mullah) who sought to liberate Somalia from colonial rule and Ethiopian occupation of the western Somali territories. Despite Hassan's attempt being unsuccessful, his actions sowed the seeds for the sense of nationalism and anti-imperialism that is still alive in the hearts of Somalis despite the unnecessary clan allegiances that may hinder the pride of Somalia's nationalism. Following the World War II in 1943, Somalia's first nationalist party, the Somali Youth Club (SYC) was launched, and the name of the organization was changed into the Somali Youth League (SYL) in 1947. After the joining of the north (former British Somaliland) with the south (former Italian Somaliland) on July 1, 1960, Somalia gained its independence and the Somali Republic was born. However, the peaceful climate in which the country transitioned into an independent nation-state was only temporary, as the situation within the country erupted into violent conflict in the late 1980s. The official overall collapse of the Somali State was 1991, and as a result, since then, Somalia was defined as stateless, and the situation in the country escalated into anarchy. Even though Somalia is now considered as a state that is recovering from the civil war, clan conflicts, which have been the basis of the civil war, are still taking place from time to time mainly for power struggle reasons.

Somalia, despite the lack of a functional central government since 1991, has been able to maintain a robust informal economy where the private sector enterprises albeit small, have had notable successes³. The Somali economy is generally based on agriculture and livestock production, forestry, fisheries, money transfers and telecommunications⁴, which contributes significantly to Somalia's gross domestic product (GDP). Recent studies on the Somali economy have demonstrated that remittances from overseas based Somalis have been accounting for a significant source of revenue for Somalia, as these add approximately US\$1 billion per annum to the country's US\$2.37 billion GDP, according to Somalia's financial reports in 2010⁵. From this high level of remittance flow from abroad, it is overwhelmingly recognized that the support of Somali Diaspora to their families in Somalia is the main backbone that maintains the Somali economy. However, even though the unregulated economic progress was a success for Somalia, the stateless condition has brought criminal operations in the high sea piracy and violent extremist groups that exploited Islam as a cover for their political agenda. In light of the violence and ongoing conflict that the country faces, the Somali crises have drawn the attention of the

Somalis first and foremost inside and the Diasporas and the international community at large with an interest that is not limited to the state of affairs, but more with investments and rebuilding. From 2000, transitional governments, with an attempt to peace and governance, have been in place, and by August 2012, Somalia got its first permanent government since the fall of the last central government in 1991. Peace-keeping forces from African Union (AU) have been in Somalia since 2007, but as a daunting task, Somalia is still in the process of searching for peace. Before bringing this discussion to focus on Somalia's peace building process, however, it is appropriate to begin with a discussion on the issues that led Somalia to the two decades of conflict and the current state of affairs.

Background to Somalia's Current Conundrum

Since the independence in 1960, Somalia has experienced a wide range of problems that explain its current state that have to be dealt with in order to bring the country back to its state of normalcy. As mentioned earlier in this discussion, two problems that Somalia has faced in the past and continues to face are directly related to the negative influence of colonialism. Moreover, the basis for a weak state in Somalia had been laid by western imperialism which divided the nation between the British in the north, Italy in the south and the French in what was to become the Republic of Djibouti⁶. Thus, the problems Somalia faced on the dawn of its independence, has remained largely unresolved. These outstanding problems are directly related to the vagueness of the artificial colonial boundaries⁷. In their discourses on the colonial influence, scholars contend that it was and it is one of the major contributing factors to Somalia's ongoing crises, as each colonial power's course of development or interest for their protectorate was different from the local realities. For example, Italy developed agriculture in southern Somalia, while the British were more interested in resource extraction in the north. As such, this fostered intertribal conflicts over water and good pastoral land, which ultimately created the justification for secessionism and interstate conflict⁸. Specifically, some scholars contend that without the Ogaden question being resolved, Somalia's state building project will be hindered and as such, peace will not prevail in Somalia⁹.

In his discussions on colonialism, Walter Rodney, a pan-Africanist scholar, concludes that in the aftermath of colonialism, some of the problems that exist in countries such as Somalia, is the arduous job of building a modern democratic system out of the authoritarian political culture inherited from colonial rule, on the eve of independence¹⁰. Rodney and other theorists agree that for a successful transition from authoritarian to democratic, stable rule, countries need to pass through certain transitional phases. These theorists list the establishment of a national identity in the first phase, the disappearing of internal feuds in the second phase, conflicting groups coming to a compromise in phase three and finally the habituation phase where a new generation of elites uphold the democratic principles passed on to them by their predecessors¹¹. Once these four phases would have been passed through, as political transitional theorists explain, the issue of legitimacy will be addressed where there will be a shift from a traditional authority, to a national authority. Further, the theory holds that once legitimacy is established, penetration of the established order of legitimacy is forthcoming. In the case of Somalia, following the notion of the transitional theorists, it is evident there was a problem of abnormality in the sequences of Somalia's historical and political development. The argument of the political theorists is that colonialism had forcibly fenced in the various pre-colonial independent family clans into a single

political entity¹², in the process creating a huge problem, because each Somali clan perceived itself as a “nation” and as such was not willingly ready to submit the ruling of a central government. The current “federalism system” that is now entertained in Somalia can hold the concept of each clan to act as a “nation” and create its own enclaves more true nowadays. Furthermore, other scholars believe that had the various clan families come together under a national union by their own accord instead of at the behest of the colonial powers – most notable Britain – the clan conflicts that presently exist in Somalia, might not have been¹³ the case.

Moreover, another major issue that, in the long run, has contributed to the present state of affairs in Somalia is the problem of economic resources. When one looks at modernization theory, it is clear that for a country to move forward economically and socially, it requires sufficient resources from which the government could establish a solid economic foundation and build a long-lasting national unity. Scholars concur that Somalia on the eve of July 1, 1960, was in a far worse state than it was before its colonial conquest, where upon and in the years following, new systems, ideologies, institutions, practices of capitalism and such were introduced. It is posited that Somalia’s dire economic situation best explains the country’s peaceful transition into statehood that sooner erupted into violent and bloody conflict. Taken all these factors together, one can gather from the preceding discussions that there are multiplicities of issues that are directly responsible for the current state of affairs in Somalia. Thus, the country’s colonial legacy, the need for access to resources and economic viability, competition for power and state representation of clan families, are all issues that would have to be taken into consideration in order to clearly address the agenda of peace-building in Somalia.

Peace-building and the Return to Normalcy

In light of the violent and bloody conflicts in Somalia which have caused the starvation and displacement of millions of Somalis, the international community has been pushing, albeit not successful as of now, the agenda of peace-building beginning from the early 1990s. However, in order to have a clear sense of what is meant by peace-building, it is imperative to define the concept from its legitimate sources. In this case, former United Nations Secretary General Boutros-Ghali defines the peace building as a process that helps establish durable peace by addressing the root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation and institution building¹⁴. As an apocalyptic form of social disaster in the twenty-first century¹⁵, according to some scholars’ description, the Somali State ceased to exist in 1991 in terms of the modern understanding of the apparatus or system that is recognized as the working as a mechanism for control and social organization. Somalia is the country in which there has been a complete disintegration of state, and this was due to the internal conflicts caused by the civil war. The fragmentation of the state has totally ruined the infrastructure of Somalia’s metropolis, or rather, its home base – that being Mogadishu –as a result of which the country has fallen into fiefdoms that are controlled by clan-based rival factions led by warlords¹⁶ that would only come to an end in 2006 when the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) defeated the warlords in Mogadishu. However, the result of the state collapse has also created total social disarray as clan allegiances, to some extent, have replaced the sense of nationalism, and the country became fragmented into many smaller units or districts, each with its own structure and system of “governance.”

With the absence of state institutions, such as a national army, police force, judicial system and public services, Somalia became the land of the fittest, best armed and/or richest shall survive, where the most vulnerable communities were overpowered by the most vicious. This drove the country into total anarchy, leading to the loss of livelihoods, property and sense of security. By 1992, when the international community led by the United States decided to intervene, 30,000 Somalis had already lost their lives in the fighting and an estimated 300,000 had died as a result of famine related diseases and starvation. While international intervention did save some Somali lives, in early 1995 when the US and the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNISOM) realized that it had failed to bring an end to the violence in the country, international intervention was discontinued, leaving the country in the exact state it was before the intervention. To date, Somalia is still classified by the international community as a recovering fragile country, despite the fact that there have been several attempts at the national, regional and international levels to bring the country back to a state of normalcy. For example, at the national level, as demonstrated by some scholars in the discussion of Somalia's state collapse and post conflict development, during the period 1991 to 1997, there had been twelve political reconciliation conferences convened, but all to no avail. From his discussion, one gathers that failure of these political reconciliation talks was based mainly on the fact that Somali warlords were hurriedly trying to get through the reconciliation talks or were side stepping on other major issues arising from the conflict that needed to be dealt with seriously. As of now, one crucial issue that Somalia is not addressed is a comprehensive and genuine reconciliation that heals the Somali people from the wounds and mistrust that the civil war has caused.

Moreover, at the regional level, in the year 2000, Ismael Omar Guelleh, the Djiboutian President, advanced the idea of a Somali peace plan to be held in his country. It was in that conference that the Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed in August of that same year, again not receiving much success, as the legitimacy of the transitional government was being challenged by faction leaders and armed warlords, and from neighboring countries, especially Kenya and Ethiopia¹⁷. This is a perfect example that draws attention to the aforementioned discussion around the required phases of transitional government, where it was presented that for a smooth transition to a unified country, there needs to be among other things, the recognition and acceptance of an ultimate authority, to which all political duty is owed.

The lack of Somalia's transitional governments to exert their authorities and power in the country over the last two decades has only pushed them to be seen as ineffective to curb the blanket violence and instability that has inundated Somalia since the collapse of the state. However, during the last decade, there have been renewed efforts to establish a legitimate and effective central government by Somalis and the international community. Granted, these efforts are still facing the same challenges that led previous peace building attempts to fail. With Somalia becoming a hub for organized crime and high sea piracy, another challenge comes from the terrorist groups, such as al-Shabaab and other religiously motivated groups. The only way to confront these challenges is the return of the state infrastructures as Somalia is more than ever in need of functioning, legitimate state institutions, such as the national army and the police forces in order to move out from the nature of stateless.

Challenges and Opportunities in Peace-building

Somalia's is now recognized as a country that is emerging from two decades of civil war. This is an opportunity that Somalis, at any level, need to exploit to build their country. Moreover, the most objective for any country that is recovering from a long term internal conflicts is the rebuilding of state institutions in order to restore governance and rule of law. According to political studies discourse, the state, being a political system, is an indispensable mechanism for social organization in the current world system and it is considered as the single most important political phenomenon¹⁸. Thus, since Somalia's state collapse, national, regional and international bodies have been earnestly trying to restore the country's state mechanism. However, peace-building comes before the rebuilding of the state institutions. As indicated in the preceding discussions, attempts at peace building in Somalia have been undertaken on numerous occasions with little to no success, as various challenges to the attainment of peace have caused the country to fall back when little strides were made. Furthermore, during the peace conference that was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2004, in the preamble of Transitional Federal Charter for the Somali Republic in Nairobi, Kenya, the Somali delegates agreed to "live in peace and unity as one indivisible, free and sovereign nation"¹⁹. Even though some achievements, albeit small, were gained, some critics assert that due to outside interventions, Somalia's political and territorial integrity are damaged. That noted, the overall challenge to the peace building, as it has always been, is to cement the gains that have been made, and importantly, to bring others to the discussion forum for the continuation of constructive dialogue²⁰, that will lead to an end to the conflicts in Somalia.

There are different levels that have direct influences in Somalia's peace building. In these different levels, there are actors that have either helped or hindered the process in some ways. However, in this discussion, there are three levels that the report will focus on. These three levels are the international, regional and national levels.

International Level

Some analysts of Somalia's contemporary political conditions maintain that peace in Somalia is not only desirable, but also possible despite there are many challenges to achieving it²¹. In light of Barbara F. Walter's argument, peace building requires a credible third party to assure the protection of all groups. The third party, according to this argument, is the one that would also be willing to implement the necessary peace accords²². One can see that the international community playing this integral third party role by providing the assistance needed for peace building. The United Nations has been playing an active role in resolving Somalia's crisis since 1990s. However, the question is why the U.N. efforts have not been successful? Critics of external interventions argue that the international community's peace building efforts are not ideologically neutral. They contend that for the international community, governance and other peace building efforts have to eventually produce a liberal democracy and free market. For example, in the case of Somalia as well as Nigeria, militant groups al-Shabaab and Boko Haram that use "Islam" as a cover for their political goals have been posing challenges in the past and continue to challenge the western driven peace building and governance system.

The U.S. war on terrorism has somewhat paid a little attention toward the peace building efforts that Somalia needs in order to recover from the ruins of the civil war. The focus of the U.S. policy has been circling around “dual track policy” to drone attacks against al-Shabaab leadership and support of the African Union (AU) forces in Somalia. In the dual track policy, the U.S. has provided “legitimacy” to every “stakeholder” of Somalia’s complex and confused political entities. This policy has further created hierarchical crisis between Somalia’s national government (the center), regional states and other independent militias (the periphery). On the other hand, the drone attacks and the support of A.U. forces are ‘legitimized’, because Somalia is considered a safe haven for terrorist groups by providing an environment that is conducive to terrorist cells to organize. However, there has not been more focus on the rebuilding of the security infrastructures that Somalia needs in order to protect itself from the threat of al-Shabaab. Moreover, even though the United States has recently established a diplomatic relations with Somalia, the ‘dual track policy’ was the tool the U.S. has been used toward Somalia. The premises of this policy, as it was indicated earlier, is to deal with ever entity whether the Somalia’s national government and regional federal states. This policy, in fact, constrains the political sovereignty of Somalia’s national government to exert its authority on the entire country. The question that needs to be raised here is whether the U.S. intervention, at least in the case of the dual track policy is a good approach or not. Political scientists and theorists, who are against external interventions in a country’s affairs, posit themselves that democratic institutions are less likely to develop in a country subject to intervention by another country²³. When one looks at the case of Somalia and analyzes it in the context of the Cold War and east-west ideological struggles, one can easily see how external influences have impacted Somali politics, and how this has been a major challenge to the Somali peace building process. The failure of the international community to save Somalia in the early 1990s, and its support on the Ethiopian invasion in Somalia in the late 2006 can be used here as clear examples.

Regional Level

Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa, and it’s surrounded by two main African countries: Ethiopia and Kenya. As it was stated above, Somali population is 100% Muslim with a Sunni tradition and one official language compared to Kenya and Ethiopia, which are dominated by Christians, and have many ethnic groups with multiple languages²⁴. However, it is important to note that there are significant Muslim populations in both Kenya and Ethiopia. Moreover, the two countries have territories that belong to Somalia, and there are Somali ethnic groups that reside these territories, and carry their citizenship of both Kenya and Ethiopia. This is a legacy that colonial powers mainly the British left behind after its departure from Somalia so that the conflict between Somalia and its rival neighbors, can go on. The “Ogaden war” --a territorial dispute—erupted in 1977 after Somalia sent troops into Ethiopia as [most] Somali nationalists believe in the idea of “greater Somalia,” which would include the southeastern region of Ethiopia, eastern parts of Kenya and Djibouti. However, the Somali army was defeated after the former Soviet Union, which supported both countries, abandoned Somalia and Cuban troops came to the aid of Ethiopia’s army²⁵.

For the last two decades, the two countries have been maintaining their influence on Somalia’s political process directly or indirectly. These two regional governments, especially Ethiopia, have been side by side with the warlord mainly for its national interests. As a result, Ethiopia

was the main weapon supplier to the warlords, who had been fighting for power 1991 to 2006. Moreover, Ethiopia's military influence in Somalia began in 1990s as Ethiopia sent forces into central Somalia to 'defeat' Somali Islamist movement al-Ithihaad²⁶. Since 2006, Ethiopia has increased its military influence on Somalia, because of the so-called "war of terror" has pushed Ethiopia to become a proxy for the U.S. in the Horn of Africa as this has made easy for Ethiopia to interfere in the Somali affairs more often as it sees fit. In one side, Ethiopia faces Eritrea as its arch enemy in East Africa due to border disputes that arose when Eritrea declared its independence from Ethiopia in 1998. When Somalia's TNG was formed in 2000, former prime minister Ali Khalif Gallayr waged an international campaign against the Ethiopian military presence in Somalia, and although this campaign forced the Ethiopians to withdraw, Addis Ababa has kept sending its forces occasionally to Gedo, Bakool and Bay regions²⁷. Moreover, as Eritrea keeps to challenge the Ethiopian power in the Horn of Africa, both countries has struggled to have friends that are on their sides in the fragile Somali politics. As a result, in 2008, a group of the ICU created their base in Asmara, and on the other hand, Ethiopia, as it has been enjoying the support of the western powers, has maintained to make Addis Ababa as the de facto capital for Somalia's warlords. One may wonder why this has been the case. There are two factors that lead this reality. First, Addis Ababa is the seat of the African Union, which is a regional organization that has a say about the Somalia affairs. Second, even though it has recently relocated in Djibouti, Addis Ababa has been the seat of Intergovernmental Agriculture and Development (IGAD), which Somalia is one of its founding members. These two realities—and Ethiopia as a close ally to the western powers— provide Ethiopian leaders a leverage and an upper hand to impose their vision on the political affairs of Somalia. Ethiopian leaders have kept their direct and indirect intervening of the Somali affairs either during the warlords in the pre 2006, and Somalia's political landscape in the post-2006.

Though the political realities that Somalia has been going through for the last two decades was just based on the restoring of the governance system, Ethiopia has established different frameworks that helped its efforts to abort any governing system that can again dare to claim "the Ogaden territory" to emerge from Somalia. Ethiopia's invasion in Somalia in late 2006, which lasted until 2009, was nothing, but to dismantle the progress that the Islamic Courts Union made toward peace and maintaining the rule of law. The justification that Ethiopian government had presented was that the Islamic Courts were threat to "its national security," and that was not the case²⁸. Moreover, Ethiopian forces came back to Somalia under the pretext of "fighting al-Shabaab" in 2011, opening a third front alongside Kenyan troops and an African Union (AU) mission in Somalia²⁹. Even though 'defeating' of al-Shabaab is the justification that the Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia, Ethiopian forces withdrew from the southern region of Bakool in 2012 without any consultation with either AMISOM and the Federal Government of Somalia. By the time that Ethiopians withdrew, al-Shabaab militia captured the town of Hudur. The capture prompted jubilant celebrations, which included the beheading of an influential cleric in the town and displacement of other civilians³⁰. Even though Ethiopian forces are now part of the AMISOM forces in Somalia, it is questionable whether they would be happy to see a stable and strong Somali government that is capable to secure its country from inside and outside threats. As long as Ethiopia sees a threat from a stable and strong Somalia, it will continue its political and military influence in Somalia.

National Level

Somalis are described as a collective of clans, and as a nomad society, clan based systems have been in place in Somalia for long time. It was a means to resolve conflicts that used to arise due to competing on resources since most of Somalis are a pastoral society. Outside urban centers, different clans contest over resources such as water, livestock and grazing land as in the past Somali nomads have fought over the ownership of camels because of their utility for survival in Somalia's harsh environment.³¹ There are four major clans: Daarood, Hawiye, Dir and Rahanweyn or Digial and Mirifle. There is a coalition of smaller clans,³² as some clans are combined one another. For example, the Isaaq clan, which is the dominant clan in the self-declared northern region "Somaliland" is considered a sub-clan of Dir.³³ However, it is not a clan that is a problem in Somalia nor is it a factor of state failure, but it is clannism that has caused Somalia to fail. Clannism is the application of clan interests into the political system for three reasons: one, to gain more than others, two, to push your clan to be the dominant political actor in the country, and third, to mobilize clan members to show power. Clan wars that Somalis used to engage were just a source of clannism as the concept of clannism did not just begin in 1991. The ruling systems that existed from independence applied clannism in many forms. Before the military rule, the main mechanism for selecting leadership was based on clan. Clans were selecting their representatives in the Somali parliament. Furthermore, during the military regime from 1969-1991, even though clannism was "buried" it was applied in different forms. The selection of those who used to serve in the cabinet or in the ranking military personnel was mainly from the Daarood clan, and specifically on the Marehan sub-clan to remain in power.³⁴ Competency and the capability of the one who held a position was not on the basis of selecting civil servants, and nevertheless, because of the fretfulness that is caused by nepotism and injustices, other clans started to revolt against the regime. After Siad Barre's regime came to an end in 1991, Somalia's internal conditions went spiraling further down into a ditch, as the country's stability collapsed under the pressures of mass starvation due to drought and famine and continued violent civil wars between different political factions and militia groups built around clans and sub-clans³⁵. This division and fighting among Somalia clans and the absence of a central government to retain the necessary power needed to run the country, as was discussed earlier, Somalia becoming an anarchic state.

After former President Barre was ousted from office a rift between the fourteen different political or clan factions developed. This quickly became an inter-clan rivalry for the control of political power, as the various clans and sub-clan groups armed themselves and battled each other, in a bid to establish separate factions in different regions of Somalia. Today, this kind of clan conflict and the grab for political power is a major challenge to the peace building process at the national level, with, it seems, no hope of resolution or clans coming to an amicable solution for the good of all Somalis and the nation as a whole. Somali clan and sub-clan families it can be said, do not identify with the nation, as was the case on the dawn of the country's independence, when nationalism was a strong sentiment expressed by Somalis wanting an end to imperialism. Somalia, following the years after the country's independence, began to once again rely on clan identity, strengthening clan lines and in the process causing the expulsion of certain clans from certain areas. This, one can see, had created conflicts due to the need for the control of resources and major cities. One clear example of how clan conflict had and continues to impede the peace building process, can be seen in the four month long fight that took place in Mogadishu for

control of it by clan militias of General Aideed and Ali Mahdi. In the aftermath of this fighting, what little was left of Mogadishu, was completely destroyed. Inter-clan rivalry for control of cities was also evident in Kismayo and Baidoa where the Absame and Harti clans clashed as well as in Baidoa where the Digil and Mirifle clans fought for power struggle.

Furthermore, another major contention that has been hindering Somalia's peace building at the national level is the issue of Somaliland. Somaliland, the breakaway region of Somalia has for some time been seeking for recognition as a state that is independent from Somalia. As in disputes arising with Puntland region, Somaliland claims to the entire area of the former British Somaliland. Additionally, while Somaliland is calling for its breakaway and independence from Somalia, Puntland is advocating for the re-establishment of a united, but federal Somalia. Further, when one looks at the issue of clan rivalry, it is clear that the same thing is happening in the self-declared region of Somaliland as intra-clan warfare caused significant damages there. As this report clearly uncovered, foreign meddling, whether regional and international, inter-clan rivalry, and such are issues directly related to a nation that has maintained a state of statelessness for over two decades.

In order to contain the clan conflicts over power and resources, which have been the biggest obstacles that Somalis have been facing since the ousting of the last central government in 1991, in the Arta Conference of Djibouti in 2000, Somalis agreed the so-called 4.5 formula in order to "share power equally." This is the "system" that has been in place for the last fifteen years. As of now, Somalis fail to agree on a system that they can use for the upcoming "elections" that are set for August this year as the contentions of whether to stay in the 4.5 formula or move to "district level" formula in order to "empower" the Somali citizen instead of having elders dictate the process as it happened in 2012.

The Way Forward

While the prospects for the restoration of peace and order in Somalia and the eventual establishment of a government body may seem bleak, there may nevertheless be some hope for Somalia. If mindsets held by Somali clans or leaders and the people in general are changed towards modern and comprehensive governance system throughout Somalia instead of being busy with mini-tribal states, Somalia will be capable to govern itself. Recently, the young Somali generations have demonstrated to move away from the issue of clannism that has been one of the main causes of Somalia's internal conflict for the last two decades. Despite internal clan conflicts have only led to the displacement of many Somalis, the younger generation cross clan barriers and exchange ideas in large numbers inside Somalia and in the Diaspora. Here there is an opportunity for the sense of nationalism to take its roots in these young people's lives, as holding on to clan based politics will not bring solutions to Somalia's problems.

On the issue of legitimate conflict resolution, peace building requires a participatory process, which is a process that women are involved in the peace building agenda since they bring a gender perspective to the substance of the negotiations³⁶. Further, Somalia's peace builders have been pushing for a central government to control all the Somali territories, an aim that has not been very forthcoming as clan conflicts still prevalent. It might be more realistic therefore, in the quest for peace and nation building; autonomous states are allowed to function with the

conditions that they are capable of providing goods and services to the local people, promoting the sense of unity and most importantly, recognizing the absolute authority of the central government on the issues of foreign relations, defense and the authority of the central bank for printing a common national currency. Also, as the system of federalism is a concept that is new to the Somalis, it is crucial to define it in a simple way that the Somali people can understand what it is and how it works.

For the issue of security, Somalis, as noted in the beginning of this discussion, are predominantly Muslims; therefore, it might be necessary to continue the channels of dialogue with individuals from al-Shabaab who are willing to reject violence in order to promote a peaceful and inclusive political agenda for the future of the country.

Finally, the involvement of Somalis at every stage of peace talks is very important for the country to create in order to reconstruct an integrated and inclusive governance system. Even though it is understandable that some Somalis fear from a top down approach governance system, it is imperative to note that a strong central authority that is capable of protecting the political and territorial integrity of Somalia as a state is crucial.

Endnotes

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- ²⁸ Abukar Sanei. 2006. Factors Behind Ethiopia's War against Somalia. (*Sudan Tribune*, Dec. 26). <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article19449>.
- ²⁹ Aarson Maasho. 2013. Ethiopia Says Foils Somali Rebel Plot to Seize U.N. Staff. (*Reuters*, March 25).
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³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

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Source: UN Cartographic Section