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# Conflict Déjà vu in Mudug Region

*Impact of Statebuilding on Peace and Interstate Relations in Somalia*

## ABOUT NEW ACCESS INTERNATIONAL (NAI)



Founded in 2012, **New Access International (NAI)** is a research and development agency based in Somalia. NAI specialises in policy research, advocacy, developmental programmes, and project consulting. NAI works closely with a range of partners and stakeholders to develop policies and programmes that best fit the organisation’s mission – to inform and educate citizenry on public policy matters, and work diligently to expand and preserve a civic space for peaceful political exchange.

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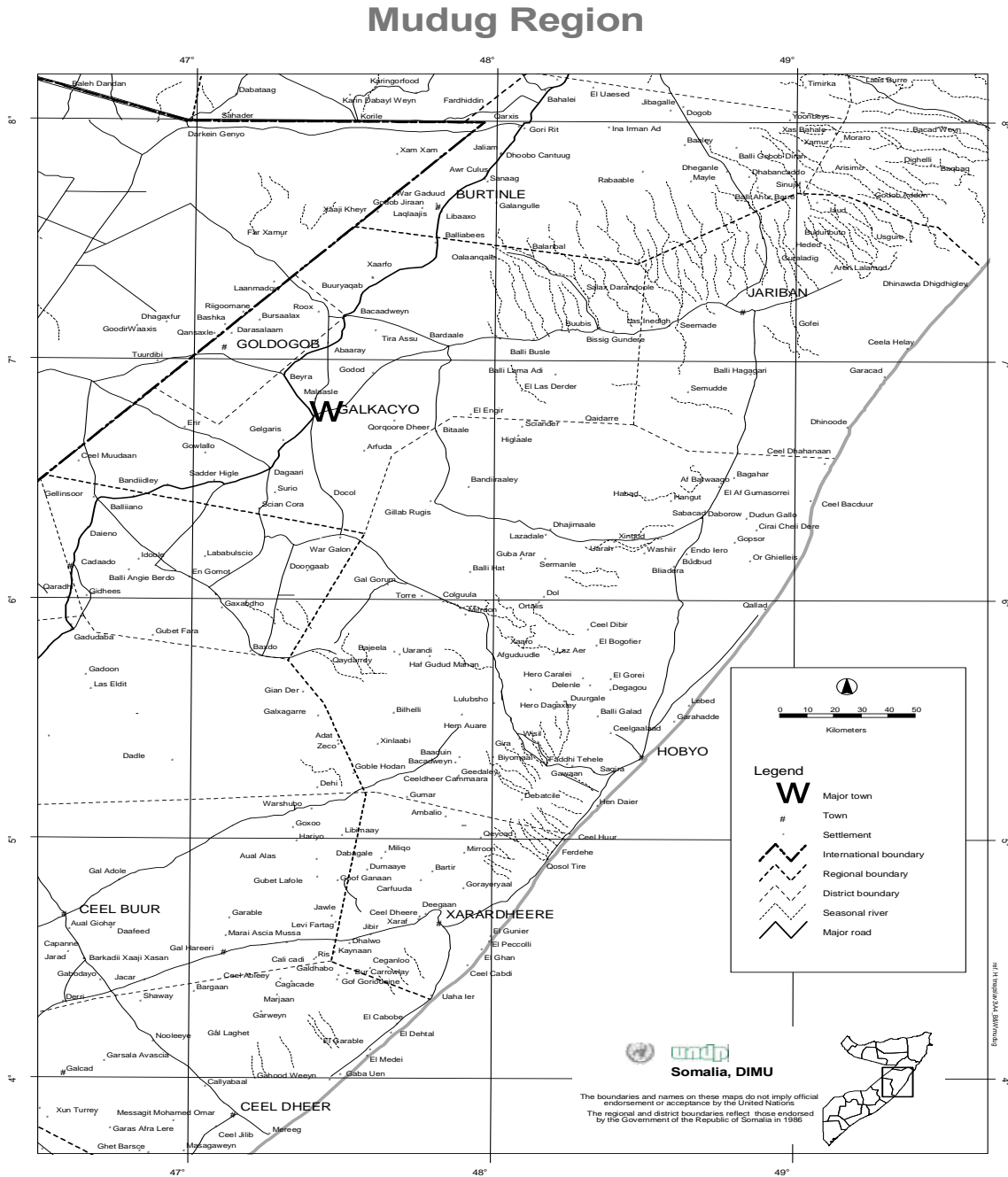
*“The bulk of conflict theory regards the issues, actors and interests as given and on that basis makes efforts to find a solution to mitigate or eliminate contradictions between them. Yet the issues, actors and interests change over time as a consequence of the social, economic and political dynamics of societies”.  
(Raimo Vayrynen)*

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# Map of Mudug Region, Somalia



Source: UNDP

## Terms and Abbreviations

AFRICOM	African Command of the United States Military
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member State of Somalia
HIPS	Heritage Institute for Policy Studies
JSF	Joint Security Force for Galkayo
MPA	Mudug Peace Agreement of 1993
NAI	New Access International
PFC	Provisional Federal Constitution of Somalia
SNA	Somali National Army
UAE	United Arab Emirates
VEO	Violent Extremist Organisations
UN OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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## Executive Summary

Mudug region is perhaps Somalia’s most deeply divided administrative region, with layers of divergent loyalties fostering an environment of social mistrust, institutional paralysis and chronic insecurity. The conflict is multi-layered, has impacted millions of lives and turned Mudug region into the epicentre of Somalia’s complex political rivalries. In recent years, top-down approaches to statebuilding processes and tense relations between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS), has been an additional aggravating factor.

This research study analyses the impact of top-down statebuilding processes on interstate relations and its impact to peace and stability. Renowned sociologist and founder of the discipline for Peace and Conflict Studies, Johan Galtung, believes that the basic aspect of peace is the relations between parties. Using this as premise, NAI set out to understand what impact important political processes, such as statebuilding and state elections, have had on the relations of competing factions or parties in Mudug region. Did top-down political processes have a polarising effect on relations between social groups within Mudug region? And, what impact did this have on peace between communities in Mudug region?

A number of data collection methods were utilised, included desk review, media monitoring, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The fieldwork was undertaken in five geographical districts in Adaado, Dhusamareeb, Galkayo (south and north), Ba’adweyn, and Garowe. The analysis utilised the five dimensions of social cohesion [positive/negative] – *recognition/rejection, belonging/isolation, legitimacy/illegitimacy, participation/non-involvement, and inclusion/exclusion* – to analyse the political processes’ impact on social cohesion in Mudug region. In addition, the analysis also applied the situation in Mudug to the *in-group /out-group hypothesis*, where assumptions of external threats/conflict, contribute to internal cohesion of a group.

The report found that successive FGS administrations pursued policies to monopolise the statebuilding process to their advantage, resulting in a top-down process that adversely impacted peace and social cohesion within Mudug region. The statebuilding and electoral process of Galmudug were controversial and drew attention away from security, which continued to worsen during both political processes. This was largely due to the breakdown in relations between Puntland and Galmudug, two state governments that administer areas of Mudug region. The statebuilding process for Galmudug in 2015 impacted social cohesion within Galmudug, as political elites were largely sidelined from owning the process. Galmudug’s internal cohesion troubles was eclipsed by Puntland’s quick initial rejection of the state formation process. The public row between the two neighbouring states led to officials from both sides engaging in negative rhetoric and speculation from the Somali media, while insecurity continued to grip the region. This quickly spiralled into two bouts of conflict (2015 and 2016), as social cohesion at the communal level in Galkayo was deeply impacted by the controversial statebuilding process.

In 2019, the FGS again played a heavy hand in the election process of Galmudug, which gave rise to the same symptoms witnessed in 2015. Increased insecurity and a breakdown of cooperation between Galmudug and Puntland were also visible. The 2019 process, however, had a more visible breakdown of social cohesion within Galmudug. The analysis indicates that the current situation in Mudug region continues to follow the same trajectory as 2015, which can have even more devastating consequences for the region.

Given the current trajectory of Mudug region, conflict resolution processes will not suffice as the conflict has continued to suck in new issues, such as federalisation process, constantly transforming to take on new contradictions. NAI proposes conflict transformation as a means to transform the conflictual relationship that the communities and political groups have been entrenched in since 1991. Conflict transformation seeks to transform the relations, issues, interests, and if crucial, the structures of society that enable the continuation of conflict. Raimo Väyrynen proposes four avenues of conflict transformation, which are: *actor transformation, issue transformation, rule transformation and structural transformation*. Somalia’s political transformation to a federal republic, despite social identity being largely based on clan, will also require a transformation of the issues, actors and rules that impact conflict. Given Somalia’s volatility and the political complexities that contribute to it, the concept of adaptive peacebuilding, which employs an iterative process of learning and adaptation to peacebuilding, is fitting for the concept of conflict transformation. NAI utilises conflict transformation and adaptive peacebuilding to propose a number of recommendations that will lay the foundation for an extensive reconciliation process.



## Mudug Conflict Background

Mudug region is located in central Somalia, bordered to the north by Nugal region, to the south Galgaduud region, to the west of Ethiopia and east to the Indian Ocean. The region consists of five administrative districts with Galkayo as administrative capital, with two districts in the north under Puntland jurisdiction and two districts in the south in Galmudug. The region’s population is estimated at nearly 718,000 people.<sup>1</sup> During Somalia’s 30-year history of national government before the civil war, Mudug was one of the most underdeveloped regions, and suffered much during the early years of the Somali civil war. Between 1991-1993, rival armed militias violently competed for land, power and resources. They represented competing socio-political interests within the region, which later was divided into two administrative jurisdictions of Puntland and Galmudug states. The armed conflict centred around the important commercial district of Galkayo. By the end of 1993, the Mudug Peace Agreement (MPA) was signed between warring factions, a ceasefire implemented, and displaced communities were encouraged to return to their homes.<sup>2</sup>

The MPA was by and large an elite political bargain, devoid of any effective reconciliation and conflict transformation.<sup>3</sup> It therefore did not offer any long-term pathways to quell the underlying social hostilities, economic rivalries, and territorial disputes, and thereby paved the way for prolonged political instability and local insecurity. The recurring bouts of conflict cannot be written off as clan rivalries. They are often multi-layered, and expand to include various actors, such as federal and state governments, clan militias, violent extremist organisations (VEOs), and war profiteers who often wittingly or unwittingly contribute to the escalation of violent struggle over land, power and resources.

The structural roots of the conflict stretch further back than the Somali civil war. When European colonial powers arrived on the Somali peninsula in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and determined new geographical boundaries that only exacerbated clan and political rivalries in the area. Chief among these was the ‘Tomaselli Line’, with which Italian colonial administrators divided the district of Galkayo, and thus divided it among the region’s two main clan families.<sup>4</sup> The Somali state collapse and subsequent inter-communal violence of the early 1990s transformed these local issues into a larger conflict that entailed violent competition over land, power and resources.<sup>5</sup> The Somali federalisation process has elevated the communal standoff to a full-fledged conflict between two of Somalia’s federal member states.<sup>6</sup>

Galkayo has undergone successive years of peace initiatives driven by local and international actors, with a focus on peacebuilding in the city. Yet, tensions remain high in rural areas and frequently become a catalyst for wider instability in Mudug region. Currently, the division of Mudug region between Puntland and Galmudug remains undefined, with ever-shifting

<sup>1</sup> “Population Estimation Survey 2014: For the 18 Pre-War Regions of Somalia,” United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), (October 2014)

<sup>2</sup> “*Gaalkacyo Conflict: Drivers, Contributors and Potential Solutions*”. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies. (2016)

<sup>3</sup> In this, the MPA was reflective of the elite compacts that shaped Somalia’s peace process and continue to shape it to this day. See: Ken Menkhaus. *Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Somalia Case Study*. DFID Stabilisation Unit. (2018)

<sup>4</sup> *Galkayo Conflict Assessment: December 2016 – March 2017*. StEFS Project. cf. Interpeace & PDRC. (2017)

<sup>5</sup> Zakaria Yusuf & Abdul Khalif, *Galkayo and Somalia’s Dangerous Faultlines*. International Crisis Group, Commentary. (2015)

<sup>6</sup> HIPS. *Gaalkacyo Conflict: Drivers, Contributors and Potential Solutions*. (2016)

clan settlement patterns serving as unofficial state boundary lines. As a result, Mudug continues to experience frequent insecurity and chronic underdevelopment.

## Timeline of Major Events

### 2015-2016 Sub-national Conflict in Mudug Region

To date, Somali federalism remains somewhat muddled. With the Provisional Federal Constitution (PFC) in a constant state of review, powers and limitations of different levels of government are not clearly delineated and state structures are based on vaguely worded articles open to differing interpretations. This dearth of a clear and predictable political-legal environment has rendered Mudug region especially vulnerable to manipulation and politicisation by competing interests at the federal, state, and local levels.

This dynamic became apparent in late 2015 and late 2016, when communal clashes overtook Galkayo and quickly evolved into an armed conflict between the states of Puntland and Galmudug. November 2015 saw more than 21 deaths and some 55,000 Galkayo district residents displaced by the conflict.<sup>7</sup> By December 1, the administrations of Puntland and Galmudug negotiated a ceasefire with an intervention from the FGS and United Arab Emirates (UAE).<sup>8</sup> The region remained tense, and the agreement collapsed less than a year later, when on October 7, 2016, renewed fighting in Galkayo led to over 11 deaths, and by end of the month the UN stated 75,000 thousand civilians mostly women and children were displaced.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the Somali media coverage and analysis attributes the conflict to a jurisdictional dispute, with little attention to the wider historical and contextual issues that escalated this conflict. Under the leadership of then-President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the FGS adopted a top-down approach to the state formation process in Galmudug. The process was amplified by media publishing competing allegations by local politicians, seeking to exploit the still-shaky relations between local elites and the federal government. During that time, Somalia was engaged in preparing for national elections which further polarised the Somali people.

All of these issues were exacerbated by underlying historical clan grievances, lack of cooperation between Galmudug and Puntland, who instead engaged in allegations and counter-allegations – a recipe for further conflict that soon manifested in Galkayo. A road construction project in Galkayo by the Puntland government sufficed to ignite the disintegrating relationship between Galmudug, Puntland, and the FGS.

### Top-down State-building Approach in Galmudug

From the beginning, the FGS under the leadership of President Mohamud struggled with the momentous task of implementing a state formation process. The first two years under President Mohamud’s tenure did not yield good results for Somali federalisation, and invited more outside scrutiny to ensure that the process was implemented successfully. During that period, President Mohamud allegedly interfered with the Jubaland state formation process in

<sup>7</sup>Galkayo Conflict Assistance reaches all sides. *ICRC*, December 30 2015, [Blog Post]<https://blogs.icrc.org/somalia/2015/12/30/galkayo-conflict-assistance-reaches-all-sides/>

<sup>8</sup>Zakaria Yusuf & Abdul Khalif (2015). *Galkayo and Somalia’s Dangerous Faultlines*. International Crisis Group, Commentary.

<sup>9</sup>UNOCHA, “Humanitarian Bulletin”, October 2016, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ochasomalia\\_humanitarian\\_bulletin\\_for\\_october\\_2016.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ochasomalia_humanitarian_bulletin_for_october_2016.pdf)

what has been described as a bid to exert control over the federalisation process.<sup>10</sup> Attempting to inhibit the Jubaland state formation process exposed the President to accusations of clan-based politics and a heavy-handed top-down approach to federalism. Similar to the Jubaland experience, the FGS led 2015 Galmudug state formation also led to bloodshed.

From the onset, Puntland politicians reacted negatively to the new Galmudug state’s claimed boundaries. Then-Galmudug President Abdi Awale Qeybdiid accused Puntland in return of trying to undermine the Galmudug state formation process.<sup>11</sup>

The Galmudug Interim Administration was formed in July 2015, with strong support and intervention from the FGS in Mogadishu. Several factors illustrate the extent of FGS influence over the Galmudug state-building process:

- The former FGS Security Minister Abdikarim Hussein Guled under President Mohamud, a close associate of the president who resigned a year before the Galmudug state election, was the federal government’s favoured – and ultimately successful – candidate to lead Galmudug.
- During the Adaado Conference for Galmudug state formation process, FGS Interior Minister Abdirahman Odowaa made numerous trips to the conference venue to advance Mogadishu’s political agenda in the outcome of Galmudug state elections. The political group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a accused Minister Odowaa of “interference” and threatened that its delegates would walk out of the Adaado Conference “within 24 hours”.<sup>12</sup>

On June 20, 2015, as the Adaado Conference continued, Puntland state rejected articles on the prospective land boundaries in the new state’s constitution, which defined the new state as the merger of “Mudug and Galgaduud regions”.<sup>13</sup> For Galmudug, this was important as Article 49(6) of the PFC stipulates that a minimum of two administrative regions is required for a federal member state to form. Puntland government’s concern was that the new state’s constitution laid claim to districts under *de facto* Puntland administrative jurisdiction, notably Galkayo and north Mudug region.

On October 14, 2014, former FGS Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ahmed signed a 12-point Cooperation Agreement with then-Puntland President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali ‘Gaas’. Article 1C of the Agreement stipulated that “it was agreed that the [Federal Member] State being formed in central regions be comprised of Galgaduud region and South Mudug region, and it was emphasised that North Mudug is part of Puntland State.”<sup>14</sup> This was done in a bid to assuage Puntland’s concerns, but did not have the desired effect.

The manner in which Galmudug state and its governance structures was formed worried the Puntland administration, especially on the impact the new administration would have on peace and stability in Galkayo and Mudug region more broadly. In the wake of mistrust between Puntland and the FGS, rumours that the FGS wanted the proposed State to include the entire

<sup>10</sup> Jorgic, Drazen and Blair, Edmund. “Somali govt undermining federal plan - regional leader”, *Reuters*, 29 August 2013. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-region-idUKBRE97S0BN20130829>

<sup>11</sup> Asad Abdullahi Mataan, What caused Galmudug to reverse its decision to close the airport. *Caasimada Online*, September 28 2014, <https://www.caasimada.net/maxaa-sababay-galmudug-in-ay-ka-laabato-goaankiisa-ay-ku-xirtay-garoonka-diyaradaha-gaalkacyo/>

<sup>12</sup> Somali government in talks with Ahlu Sunna over central state formation. *Goobjoog News*. June 14 2015, <https://goobjoog.com/english/somali-government-in-talk-with-ahlu-sunna-over-central-state-formation/>

<sup>13</sup> Puntland rejects Galmudug constitution. *Voice of America (VOA) Somali*, June 20 2015, <https://www.voasomali.com/a/2830658.html>

<sup>14</sup> Asad Abdullahi Mataan, FGS-Puntland Agreement. *Caasimada Online*, October 14 2014, <https://www.caasimada.net/aqriso-12-kii-qodob-ee-ay-ku-heshiyeen-df-iyo-puntland-oo-dhameystiran/>

Mudug region were rampant across Puntland, despite the FGS-Puntland agreement of October 2014, and despite attempts by the international community to provide reassurances on Galmudug state’s land boundaries.

To address the Puntland administration’s concerns, on July 27, 2015, Galmudug state parliament speaker Ali Gacal Asir declared that the new state constitution had been “revised.” In particular, Speaker Asir commented that the new state parliament voted to replace Article 2(4) of the Galmudug constitution with the revised version defining Galmudug state’s northern boundary as “Puntland state”.<sup>15</sup>

## **Troubling Rhetoric and Rise in Insecurity**

In the lead up to the Galmudug state elections, public exchanges between Puntland and the Galmudug administration accentuated the rift and directly contributed to conflict drivers in the region. In September 2014, Puntland accused Galmudug of using an airstrip south of Galkayo to import weapons.<sup>16</sup> The standoff diffused shortly thereafter, but tensions did not subside. Then-Galmudug President Qeybdiid retorted that Puntland wanted the Galmudug state-building process to “end in failure.”<sup>17</sup>

Months before the Galmudug state formation process, insecurity in Galkayo had been growing, with a number of attacks on Puntland government and civilian targets. On March 15, 2015, a customs duty official was killed by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED), fitted under his car.<sup>18</sup> Less than a month later, on April 5, the Deputy Governor of Mudug region Ahmed Muse Nur survived a roadside bomb that injured six bystanders.<sup>19</sup> On April 28, Mohamed Abdirahman Dhabancad, who was at the time the head of an electricity company in Galkayo, survived a car bomb attack; in February 2019, Mr. Dhabancad was nominated as Puntland Minister of Interior.<sup>20</sup> Finally on May 8 2015, Said Hussein Nur, a member of the Puntland state parliament, was killed after gunmen opened fire and launched hand grenades at his vehicle. His bodyguard was also killed in the attack.<sup>21</sup> All attacks bore the hallmarks of violent extremist organisations. Yet, Al Shabaab claimed only the last attack.

The insecurity in north Galkayo gave rise to undertones of speculation from the Puntland side of Galmudug’s involvement with regards to the attacks. Although these claims were not substantiated by any evidence, the rhetoric and tense political situation reinforced this sentiment:

*“Some of these killings were being committed by Al Shabaab, but many were not claimed by them. But the majority of the perpetrators were never caught, which led to Puntland authorities and residents suspecting that South Galkayo was providing a safe haven to elements that wanted to destabilise North Galkayo.”*

### **Businesswoman, 35, North Galkayo**

<sup>15</sup> “Controversial article changed in Galmudug constitution”, *Somali Broadcasting Corporation (SBC)*, July 27 2015, <http://allsbc.com/dastuurka-maamulka-galmudug-oo-laga-badalay-qodob-lagu-muransanaa/>

<sup>16</sup> Asad Abdullahi Mataan. “Puntland levies controversial accusation on Qeybdiid and a crisis looms”, *Caasimada Online*, September 22 2014, <https://www.caasimada.net/puntland-oo-ogaatay-in-galmudug-ay-ka-soo-dagaan-diyaarado-hub-ka-keenay-muqdisho/>

<sup>17</sup> Asad Abdullahi Mataan. “What caused Galmudug to reverse its decision to close the airport.” *Caasimada Online*. September 28 2014 <https://www.caasimada.net/maxaa-sababay-galmudug-in-ay-ka-laabato-goaankiisa-ay-ku-xirtay-garoonka-diyaaradaha-gaalkacyo/>

<sup>18</sup> “Car Explosion in Galkayo kills custom duty chief for Galkayo”, *Goobjoog News*, March 1 2015, <http://goobjoog.com/english/car-explosion-in-galkaayo-kills-custom-duty-chief-for-galkaayo/>

<sup>19</sup> “Roadside bombing targets deputy governor in Galkayo”, *Goobjoog News*. April 7 2015, <http://goobjoog.com/english/roadside-bombing-targets-deputy-governor-in-galkaio/>

<sup>20</sup> “Bomb Targets UNOCHA Officer in Galkayo”, *Garoweonline*, April 28 2015, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-bomb-targets-unocha-officer-in-galkayo>

<sup>21</sup> “Somalia’s terrorist militants claim the murder of regional lawmaker”, *Raxanreeb (RBC)*. May 9 2015, <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2015/05/somalia-somalias-terrorist-militants-claim-the-murder-of-regional-lawmaker/>

In November 2015, just four months after Galmudug was established and its parliamentarians revised their jurisdictional boundaries, the Puntland-nominated Galkayo local government attempted to construct a new road in Garsoor neighbourhood. A two-day violent attack ensued, which saw mortars and heavy artillery being used, and resulted in a rapid militarisation of the unofficial green-line dividing Galkayo.<sup>22</sup> Other Somali administrations and the international community reacted with great concern. Tensions were temporarily subdued after a ceasefire was brokered, but less than a year later, the conflict resurfaced with even more devastating consequences.

**Incidents and Fatalities, Mudug Region, Somalia (2015-2016)<sup>23</sup>**

TIME	LOCATION	INCIDENTS	FATALITIES
January-December 2015	Mudug Region	69 (5.75 incidents/month)	97 (8 fatalities/month)
January-December 2016	Mudug Region	133 (9.4 incidents/month)	233 (19.4 fatalities/month)

Source: ACLED Data

Tensions were again heightened when, on September 28, 2016, Galmudug alleged that the US military’s AFRICOM airstrike based on intelligence provided by the Puntland Security Forces (PSF), killed 22 members of Galmudug security forces.<sup>24</sup> Galmudug security minister Osman Isse Nur (Taardhuleed) told BBC Somali Service that Galmudug blames Puntland and AFRICOM for the attack on its state forces.<sup>25</sup> Puntland officials asserted that those killed had in fact been members of Al Shabaab. A week later, on October 7, 2016, a military conflict erupted in Galkayo between Puntland and Galmudug forces, leading to mass displacement of civilians, an unprecedented loss of life, and a devastating effect on the local economy.<sup>26</sup>

Similar to the 2015 conflict, the cause of the violence was attributed to Puntland administration’s plans to build an animal holding grounds in a Galkayo neighbourhood near the jurisdictional line. In its October 2016 Humanitarian Bulletin, published on November 4, the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that some 80,000 civilians were displaced by the violence.<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch warned that “Galkayo is emptying out” and encouraged the warring parties – Puntland and Galmudug – “to make safety of the population central, not an afterthought.”<sup>28</sup>

Attempts at peace-making between the two states were not initially successful, as the sour relations between the FGS and Puntland obstructed the brokering of peace. Puntland accused the

<sup>22</sup> “Casualties increase after Galkayo fighting”, *Goobjoog News*, November 22 2015, <https://goobjoog.com/khasaaraha-ka-dhashay -dagaalka-gaalkacyo-oo-sii-kordhay/>  
<sup>23</sup> Clionadh Raleigh, Andrew Linke, Håvard Hegre & Joakim Karlsen. Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data. *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(5), (2010), pp. 651-660.  
<sup>24</sup> Abdi Sheikh, “US accused of killing 22 in misdirected Somalia air strike”, *Reuters*, September 28 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security/u-s-accused-of-killing-22-in-misdirected-somalia-air-strike-idUSKCN11Y0UC>  
<sup>25</sup> Minister of Security Galmudug speaks of an attack on their station. *BBC Somali Service*, September 28 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-37495383>  
<sup>26</sup> Conflict breaks out in Galkayo between Puntland and Galmudug. *BBC Somali Service*, October 7 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war -37584268>  
<sup>27</sup> UNOCHA, “Humanitarian Bulletin”, October 2016, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ochasomalia\\_humanitarian\\_bulletin\\_for\\_october\\_2016.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ochasomalia_humanitarian_bulletin_for_october_2016.pdf)  
<sup>28</sup> Laetitia Bader, “Clashes in Galkayo, Somalia Harm Civilians”, *Human Rights Watch*, October 25 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/25/clashes-galkayo-somalia-harm-civilians>

FGS of providing military support to Galmudug.<sup>29</sup> Both Galmudug and Puntland asserted that the other party encroached upon the local boundaries set forth in the Mudug Peace Agreement (MPA) of June 1993.<sup>30</sup>

This escalation of conflict and political rhetoric was occurring at a time of political uncertainty over the 2016/2017 national elections. The Upper House was in the process of being formed for the first time; state presidents held the power to nominate candidates, and state parliamentarians elected the senators. Election-focused FGS leaders were jockeying for influence with state governments in the lead-up to the formation of the country’s first bicameral federal parliament, which jointly elected the president of Somalia.

## 2015/2016 Conflict Impact on Mudug Region

In Galmudug, the state formation process spearheaded by the FGS, was driving a wedge between local communities. First, the former Galmudug administration rejected the outcome of the Adaado Conference. Ahlu Sunna, which controlled large swathes of Galgaduud region including the capital Dhusamareb, even threatened to “walk out” of the conference. Yusuf Garaad, at the time a veteran journalist, had this to say after Galmudug state was formed: “Ahlu Sunnah is of the perception that their rights were excluded from the power sharing agreement [in Galmudug].”<sup>31</sup>

Internal cleavages widened as a result of FGS ministers interfering in the Adaado Conference. The power dynamics between local interests in Galmudug and the opposing political forces funded from Mogadishu further polarised a society already divided by the legacy of civil war.

As noted above, Puntland had initially opposed the new Galmudug state’s interim constitution, which laid claim to all of Mudug region. The Puntland government was also concerned about the FGS leaders’ focus on re-election. Allegations that the SNA deployed forces to Mudug region, however, trumped both of these concerns, and were construed as an attempt to ensure that a pro-FGS Galmudug leader emerged from the Adaado Conference.

The state formation of Galmudug had an adverse impact on social cohesion both outwards (between Puntland-Galmudug) and inwards (within Puntland/Galmudug). Despite assurances during Galmudug’s aforementioned constitutional revision, reservations among Puntland communities towards Galmudug’s potential intent to extend control over North Mudug did not dissipate:

*“Residents had their reservations about the [Galmudug] state formation process. President Hassan Sheikh was deeply involved. He was not popular within Puntland. So, there was a lot of doubt as to the intentions of the whole process. People were really questioning if this was a way to legitimise a takeover of Galkayo.”* – **Homemaker, female, 28, North Galkayo**

*“The state formation of Galmudug had affected local communities, driving a wedge between clans allied to the Federal Government, and rival clans that were opposing Mogadishu’s influence.”* – **Telecom company worker, male, 30, Adaado**

<sup>29</sup> “Puntland accuses FGS of backing Galmudug”, *Garowe Online*. October 11 2016, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/somalia-puntland-accuses-somali-government-of-backing-galmudug>

<sup>30</sup> “The search for Peace. The Puntland Experience: A Bottom-up Approach to Peace and State Building: Peace Initiatives in Puntland 1991-2007”, PDRC (2008), [http://www.jccp.gr.jp/\\_src/sc2335/2\\_PDRC\\_The\\_search\\_for\\_peace\\_pdrc.pdf](http://www.jccp.gr.jp/_src/sc2335/2_PDRC_The_search_for_peace_pdrc.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Yusuf Garaad, Galmudug, *Doogey Naaduwa* (blog), July 24, 2015, <http://yusuf-garaad.blogspot.com/2015/07/galmudug.html>

The impact of the top-down process also had implications on public trust in the Puntland administration. Community members were concerned that the Puntland government was not taking adequate steps to ensure the security of North Galkayo. Several residents alleged that the groups perpetuating insecurity in Galkayo, specifically Al Shabaab, were being given safe haven in South Galkayo, a claim made by Puntland officials in the past.<sup>32</sup> The concomitant persistence of insecurity, unpredictability of Galmudug’s state formation process, and a possible threat to Puntland’s jurisdictional boundaries engendered fear among residents in Puntland, especially in North Galkayo:

*“Galkayo was not very safe...many government officials were being targeted. Galkayo residents lived in fear, and when people in Galkayo feel like they are not being protected, they arm themselves.”*

**Clan Elder, 61, North Galkayo**

Accusations of destabilisation were traded by state leaders, which exacerbated a deteriorating security situation. The rift between Galmudug and Puntland did not allow for the two states to collaborate on improving security. The impact was not limited to Galkayo alone. Rather, the jurisdictional border between Puntland and Galmudug, which divides Mudug region into two large sections, became the epicentre of rural and urban conflict, mass displacement of civilians, and growing violent rhetoric.

## **2018/2019 Galmudug State Election Process**

Since Galmudug and Puntland arrived at a peace agreement in January 2017, Galkayo and its environs have enjoyed relative peace and improved regional relations. Several factors have ensured that the peace agreement holds and spoilers are suppressed.

The Joint Security Forces (JSF), comprised of soldiers from both sides, was established as an initiative led by local leaders with support from international partners. The JSF has helped to establish a good working relationship between Galmudug and Puntland and provided a basis for trust. The JSF constitutes the first official recognition by both administrations that their mutual security is dependent on a formal arrangement. This development buttressed the two states’ commitment to uphold peace and was pivotal in de-escalating conflict in the city and its rural surroundings. Furthermore, the public’s weariness of conflict and the impact of cross-community groups’ lobbying for peace in Galkayo should not be understated.

The change in leadership in Galmudug provided another impetus for positive change. On January 26, 2017, Galmudug President Abdikarim Hussein Guled stepped down before completing his tenure, citing health issues. Four months later, on May 3, 2017, veteran politician and former federal member of parliament Ahmed Duale Gelle ‘Haaf’ was elected as President of Galmudug. His first priority was to ameliorate his administration’s relationship within Galmudug politics and with Puntland. To this end, President Haaf emphasised the security of Galkayo and encouraged the JSF security cooperation with Puntland.

The new President also bolstered relations with the rival Ahlu Sunna administration in Dhusamareb. Ahlu Sunna had refused to join the previous government, and doubled down on its strongholds in Dhusamareb and Guriceel as the *de facto* governing body. President Haaf and the

<sup>32</sup> Interpeace & PDRC. *Galkayo Conflict Assessment: December 2016 – March 2017*. STEFS Project, 2017, p. 21.

Ahlu Sunna leadership of Sheikh Mohamed Shakir Ali Hassan arrived at an agreement on December 6, 2017, in Djibouti, facilitated by the FGS Ministry of Interior.<sup>33</sup>

Under that agreement, the Galmudug state government would relocate its capital to Dhusamareb, Ahlu Sunna leader Sheikh Shakir would become Galmudug’s Chief of Cabinet, and Ahlu Sunna fighters would be incorporated into Galmudug state forces. Several variables precipitated this agreement:

- National elections brought an end to prolonged divisiveness and disruption.
- The public’s fervour for the newly elected President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed ‘Farmajo’ allowed for a reset in relations between the FGS and FMS.
- The election of the Galmudug President free from FGS interference strengthened the state government’s legitimacy within Galmudug constituencies.

All of these factors contributed to ensuring peace and allowed for stability to be maintained for two years. Over the course of 2018/2019, however, the strong relationships that underpinned peace in Mudug region were tested and slowly began to unravel.

## Top-down State Building Approach

The unravelling began with a political dispute over the Galmudug president’s term in office that began in mid-2018.<sup>34</sup> One faction argued that President Haaf was elected before his predecessor finished his term, and should therefore be expected to complete the remaining term in office. President Haaf and his supporters contended that it was a new election and the president was elected for a full four-year term. The internecine politics of Galmudug and the weak transitional arrangements for state office contributed to a year-long dispute and impasse. On June 24, 2019, President Haaf agreed to hold elections,<sup>35</sup> and on July 3, ‘nominated’ the FGS Ministry of Interior to oversee the Galmudug state electoral process.<sup>36</sup>

In Puntland, on May 5, 2019, the newly elected President Said Abdullahi Mohamed ‘Deni’ hosted a national conference with FGS and FMS leaders in Garowe to resolve some of the deadlock between the FGS and FMS. Galmudug elections formed part of the agenda, with FGS leaders demanding an election in Galmudug and President Deni allegedly supporting President Haaf to stay on for a full term.<sup>37</sup> With an increasingly entrenched stand-off between the parties, the Puntland leader appeared to prioritise a reliable partner in Galmudug.

A month before President Haaf caved in to demands for elections, Ahlu Sunna had arrived at an agreement with the FGS Ministry of Interior that would provide the group 20 seats in Galmudug’s parliament, and Ahlu Sunna forces were reported to be gradually incorporated into the Somali National Army (SNA).<sup>38</sup> However, the intended date for elections was repeatedly postponed, which in turn was met with growing concerns among Galmudug leaders over the

<sup>33</sup> “UN envoy for Somalia welcomes signing of power-sharing agreement between Galmudug and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a,” *UNSOM*, December 7 2017, <https://unsom.unmissions.org/un-envoy-somalia-welcomes-signing-power-sharing-agreement-between-galmudug-and-ahlu-sunna-wal-jama%E2%80%99>

<sup>34</sup> “Haaf Galmudug Election Dispute Heats Up”, *Kalfadhi*, July 11 2018, <https://www.kalfadhi.com/2018/07/11/khilaafka-u-dhaxeeya-madaxda-galmudug-oo-cuuryaamiyay-howlihii-maamulkaas/2183/>

<sup>35</sup> “Haaf Agrees to Galmudug election”, *Mustabal Radio*. June 24 2019, <https://www.mustaqbalradio.net/xaaf-oo-aqbalay-doorashada-galmudug-bisha-luuliyoo-kana-baxay-heshiiskii-uu-la-galay-ahlu-sunna-warsaxaafadeed/>

<sup>36</sup> “Haaf nominates Federal Government as ‘representative’ for elections and talks.” *Garowe Online*, July 4 2019, <https://www.garoweonline.com/so/news/somalia/xaaf-oo-xukuumada-u-wakiishay-coddeynta-iyo-wada-hadalada-galmudug>

<sup>37</sup> “Puntland Situation Report May 2019”, *New Access International*, 2019, pg 7, [www.naisomalia.com/publications](http://www.naisomalia.com/publications)

<sup>38</sup> “Ahlu Sunna soldiers to be incorporated into SNA”, *CeelHuur Online*, July 2 2019, <https://ceelhuur.com/dowladda-oo-billaawday-hab-raaca-ciidamada-ahlu-sunna-lagu-qarameynayo-sawirro/>



FGS intervention. FGS leaders in Galmudug prioritised a reconciliation process before the Galmudug election.

This process remained inconclusive as intractable issues bogged down the process, due to which the FGS leadership appeared to lose confidence in President Haaf and Ahlu Sunna. In October 2019, Ahlu Sunna accused the FGS of having backtracked on their agreement, and warned that the FGS was deploying SNA troops to Galmudug.<sup>39</sup> A month later, FGS troops and Ahlu Sunna forces clashed in Guri’el. After initial skirmishes, the FGS forces took control of the city.<sup>40</sup> This widened local divisions and resulted in the emergence of three ‘presidents’ elected in Galmudug by rival factions. Among these was the FGS favourite, at the time Federal State Minister for Public Works, Ahmed Abdi Kariye ‘Qoorqoor’, who was elected as the new Galmudug president on February 2, 2020, in the first round of voting.<sup>41</sup>

The new Galmudug president offered to engage in dialogue with both former president Haaf and Ahlu Sunna leaders. Now-deposed President Haaf and his supporters left Dhusamareb and set up base in South Galkayo. The FGS recognised, supported, and influenced the state election in Dhusamareb, now both *de jure* and *de facto* capital of Galmudug, and did not welcome the political manoeuvrings of Haaf or Ahlu Sunna. President Qoorqoor also invited Galmudug and FGS opposition including federal MPs and senators from Galmudug to Dhusamareb for discussions and dialogue. From the onset, President Qoorqoor embarked on a conciliatory approach to rebuild the social fabric of Galmudug constituencies, strained by three political transitions in five years.

Not all political forces in Galmudug were entirely satisfied with the new president’s policy. On February 28, 2020, Galmudug forces under President Qoorqoor and allied SNA troops that had been airlifted by the FGS to Dhusamareb throughout 2019, militarily seized control of Ahlu Sunna’s main base in Dhusamareb and took full control of the state capital.<sup>42</sup> Ahlu Sunna’s leadership fled, transiting overseas via a stopover in Puntland, much to the chagrin of Galmudug’s new administration.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the election, Puntland had remained quiet and did not issue any statements on the post-election political impasse in Galmudug. When Qoorqoor emerged victorious, Puntland did not issue a congratulatory message. Instead, Garowe remained quiet as speculation spread that it was maintaining its alliance with Haaf and Ahlu Sunna, as a counter-balance to FGS influence in Galmudug.

Speaking at the Puntland Consultative Conference, former Puntland president and current Upper House Senator Abdirahman Mohamed Farole said that “Puntland should accept the new president of Galmudug [Ahmed Abdi Kariye Qoorqoor]. We [Puntland in 2011] made friends with Galmudug when it [administration] was limited to South Galkayo, and today it is a complete administration”. The Senator furthermore noted that: “Ahlu Sunna can visit Garowe. It

<sup>39</sup> “Abdi Cade. Ahlu Sunna says FGS has backed out of agreement”, *Allbanaadir*, October 29 2019, <https://www.allbanaadir.org/?p=133417>

<sup>40</sup> Somali National Forces capture Guriel. (2019, November 3). *Mustaqbal Radio*. November 3 2019, <https://www.mustaqbalradio.net/ciidanka-dowladda-oo-qabsaday-guraceel/>

<sup>41</sup> “Ahmed Abdi Kariye wins Galmudug election.” *VOA Somalia*, February 2 2020, <https://www.voasomali.com/a/5270251.html>

<sup>42</sup> “Ahlu Sunna clashes with FGS troops in Dhusamareeb,” *Mustaqbal Radio*, February 28 2020, <https://www.mustaqbalradio.net/dagaal-udhaxeeya-ciidamada-dowladda-iyo-ahlu-sunna-oo-ka-socda-dhusamareeb/>

<sup>43</sup> “Ahlu Sunna surrenders to FGS troops in Dhusamareeb.” *Garowe Online*. February 29 2020, <https://www.garoweonline.com/so/news/somalia/hogaanka-ahlu-sunna-oo-isku-dhiibay-ciidamadda-dowladda-soomaaliya>

is a Somali city. However, they cannot be here for political issues”.<sup>44</sup> In his statement, Senator Farole gave public advice to the Puntland state leadership: to mend ties with the new president of Galmudug, and, at the same time, sharing with Galmudug politicians and their constituencies the Puntland people’s support for a united and stable Galmudug.

In a bid to shore up public support, after the breakdown of the alliance between the FGS and Ahlu Sunna, new President Qoorqoor held talks with Haaf on April 6, 2020, when he welcomed the former Galmudug leader and his delegation in the northern outskirts of Dhusamareb.<sup>45</sup> It marked the end of Galmudug’s arduous and divisive political transition, and signalled the ex-president’s endorsement of Ahmed Qoorqoor as the legitimate president of Galmudug state.

On September 5, 2019, the two-month Hobyo Conference of the Habar Gedir/Hawiye clan concluded with a conference declaration and the emergence of the Leadership Council. Political sources confirmed to NAI that the 68-member Leadership Council had played “an instrumental role” mediating between new President Qoorqoor and his opposition, especially former president Haaf. The Leadership Council, led by Prof. Abdulkadir Mohamed Shirwa, was mandated to “lead the political, economic, cultural and judicial direction” of the Habar Gedir clan, the predominant Hawiye clan that resides in Galmudug state.<sup>46</sup> In efforts to secure the new administration’s legitimacy and consolidate its authority, Qoorqoor sought the advice and input from the Leadership Council, connecting his administration to communities and moving towards political consolidation. Whilst President Qoorqoor is working to improve social cohesion within Galmudug, relations between Puntland and Galmudug remained strained, and the security of Galkayo continued to deteriorate.

## **Troubling Rhetoric and Rise in Insecurity 2.0**

Much like 2015/2016, the year 2019 saw a steady rise in violence in Galkayo and the wider Mudug region. This was largely ignored by both state administrations. Puntland’s new leaders focused on consolidating state power, whilst Galmudug was gripped by a drawn-out political transition. In May 2019, Col. Khalif Nur Shiil became the second commander of the JSF to be killed in Galkayo, within two years.<sup>47</sup> Local officials classified the incident as a “terror attack,” but the perpetrators were never caught.<sup>48</sup> In July 2019, two violent attacks occurred in east and west Mudug. The first attack in Saho district, on July 12, killed six persons.<sup>49</sup> The second incident killed four nomads in Balibusle town in east Mudug region. By August, the situation continued to worsen, as clan militias continued a spree of revenge killings. In a span of three days, at least seven people died in three separate attacks.<sup>50</sup>

Despite interjections by clan elders, the situation continued to escalate. In September 2019, clan militias from Galmudug allegedly opened fire on a passenger bus, killing at least three persons and wounding the driver, in an area west of Galkayo.<sup>51</sup> Much like in 2014, there were

<sup>44</sup> “Farole: Puntland should accept new president of Galmudug.” *Horseedmedia*, March 15 2020, <https://horseedmedia.net/2020/03/15/farole-puntland-ha-aqbasho-madaxweynaha-cusub-ee-galmudug/>

<sup>45</sup> “Galmudug president received former regional president in Dhusamareb.” *Mustaqbal Radio*, April 6 2020, <https://www.mustaqbalradio.net/galmudug-president-receives-former-regional-president-in-dhusamareb/>

<sup>46</sup> “Decisions issued from Hobyo Conference that concluded today.” *BBC Somali*, September 5 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/somali/49595831>

<sup>47</sup> *Puntland Situation Report May 2019*, New Access International, 2019, pg 2, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>49</sup> *Puntland Situation Report July 2019*, New Access International, 2019, pg 4, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>50</sup> *Puntland Situation Report August 2019*, New Access International, 2019, pg 4, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>51</sup> *Puntland Situation Report, September 2019*, New Access International, 2019, pg 3, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

reports of ammunitions provided to Galmudug by the FGS. On October 20, 2019, several media outlets reported that a weapons and ammunition consignment of unknown quantity was transported via ships and unloaded at the harbour of Hobyo, in Galmudug state.<sup>52</sup>

The most serious violence began in December of 2019 and is detailed in the following case study:

The Towfiq-Afbarwaqo Conflict	CASE STUDY
<p>The federal state building process in Somalia has introduced additional complexities into the already contested central regions, and may have contributed to conflict in the towns of Towfiq and Afbarwako. The most recent outbreak of violence led to over 30 deaths, in part fuelled by local rivalries that have been politicised at the national and sub-national level. According to residents in the area interviewed for this study, the conflict stems from a dispute over grazing rights and land ownership between the Dir clan in Towfiq and Habar Gedir clan in Afbarwako.</p> <p>A statement by a member of the Somali diaspora in Sweden, in June 2019 and the reaction it evoked on social media, foreshadowed the conflict. On June 21, at a meeting of Somalis from Galmudug living in Sweden, one of the attendees insinuated that Towfiq was part of Galmudug.<sup>53</sup> In a video statement on June 23, Col. Mohamed Mohamud Omar Gacayte, commander of a Puntland Darawish force in Towfiq district, responded that Towfiq is part of Puntland. The colonel added that the people of Towfiq “would no longer tolerate the rhetoric and actions of clan militias.”<sup>54</sup> On December 5, fighting broke out among rival clan militias, leaving over 30 dead and many more injured. The clash took place in a town called Ina Diiday, about 15 kms north east of Afbarwaqo. News of the event travelled quickly and was met with shocked reactions. Elders and government officials rushed to the area to call for peace, whilst militias on both sides regrouped in preparation for further conflict.</p> <p>On December 9, as elders made their final preparations to mediate the conflict, violence erupted again, this time more heavily. That same day, Puntland Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratisation issued a statement blaming Galmudug forces for engaging fighting in Towfiq district of Mudug region.<sup>55</sup> Galmudug also issued a press statement, but contrarily it called for peace and demanded that the fighting sides stop the violence “unconditionally” and encouraged local communities to “strengthen their unity” in the fight against Al Shabaab.<sup>56</sup> The following day, December 10, Puntland government issued a second press statement with a softer tone calling for “peace” in Mudug region.<sup>57</sup> Then, on December 11, Puntland Interior Minister Mohamed Abdirahman Dhabancad accused the FGS of complicity in Mudug violence, saying: “The existing situation [in Galmudug] of weak administrative structures is a result of FGS which removed [state] officials working in security, peace and governance structures.”</p> <p>Conflicting media reports seemed to downplay the extent of violence. A day after the heavy fighting, elders from Puntland, who gathered for a televised call to peace, estimated that almost 100 people were dead or injured.<sup>58</sup> The clashes that spanned two days already resembled the deadly hostilities of 2002, when more than 40 members of both clans had died and 60 had been wounded.<sup>59</sup></p>	

<sup>52</sup> *Puntland Situation Report October 2019*, New Access International, 2019, pg 2, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>53</sup> *Puntland Situation Report June 2019*, New Access International, 2019, pg 4, [whttps://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications](https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications)

<sup>54</sup> A Puntland commander sends message to Galmudug. *Puntland Post*, June 23 2019, <https://puntlandpost.net/2019/06/23/sarkaal-ka-tirsan-puntland-oo-fariin-u-diray-galmudug/>

<sup>55</sup> “Puntland accuses Galmudug of fomenting Mudug conflict.” *All Galgaduud Media*, December 09 2019, <http://www.allgalgaduud.net/2019/12/09/puntland-oo-sheegtay-in-galmudug-ay-ka-dambeeyso-dagaalkii-ka-dhacay-mudug/>

<sup>56</sup> “Galmudug issues statement on conflict in Afbarwako and Towfiq”, *Halqaran*, December 9 2019, <https://www.halqaran.com/index.php/2019/12/09/galmudug-oo-war-ka-soo-saartay-dagaalkii-ka-dhacay-deegaanadaafbarwaaqotawfiq/>

<sup>57</sup> “Puntland issues statement on Mudug conflict”, *Shabelle Media Network*, December 10 2019, <https://www.radioshabelle.com/puntland-oo-war-ka-soo-saartay-colaada-gobolka-mudug/>

<sup>58</sup> “Traditional Elders send a message of peace to the conflict in Towfiq”, *Puntland TV*, December 10 2019, [Video File], 6:51 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3STMNVNK8g>

<sup>59</sup> “Inter-clan fighting leaves 40 dead, hundreds displaced”, *The New Humanitarian*, January 30 2002, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/30000/somalia-inter-clan-fighting-leaves-40-dead-hundreds-displaced>

Undergoing transition with a strong presence of external actors and agendas, it is entirely plausible that the Galmudug state leadership was incapable of preventing the conflict at this time. The Puntland administration had recently concluded a closely fought election in which one of the major candidates was reportedly backed by the FGS.<sup>60</sup> Tensions between Puntland and the FGS deepened with reports of additional troop deployment in Galmudug.<sup>61</sup> On February 16, 2020, Puntland’s Mudug governor Ahmed Muse Nur warned via local media platforms that Puntland opposed the alleged troop deployment and intended to “defend itself” against it.<sup>62</sup>

During the tumultuous election in Galmudug, political leaders did not engage in negative rhetoric with Puntland. Yet, on February 28, the new administration publicly accused former and current Puntland presidents for undermining Galmudug’s state formation and continuing to oppose its existence. On March 12, the current spokesman for Galmudug state, Osman Isse Nuur (Taardhuleed) stated:<sup>63</sup>

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*“In 2015, [Puntland] President Abdiweli Gaas took upon himself to make sure that Galmudug’s formation did not stand. By the grace of Allah, it did not happen, Galmudug defended itself and now [Puntland President Said] Deni is trying to destabilise Galmudug. The people of Galmudug see this and will defend themselves.”*

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This escalation of rhetoric resembled 2015 and 2016; Mr. Taardhuleed, the new administration’s spokesman, was also the Galmudug Minister of Security during the conflicts of 2015 and 2016.

The communal conflicts and insecurity in Galkayo continued to last into 2020. On February 17, the chairman of the Garsoor neighbourhood in Galkayo, Abdirahman Nur Geesdiir, was killed in Galkayo by suspected militants. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility.<sup>64</sup> On February 18, Puntland sent additional troops to reinforce security in Galkayo. Despite these attempts, on the night of March 22, Mukhtar Ahmed Omar Tindle, a member of the Galkayo Local Council, was killed in Galkayo after unknown gunmen opened fire and escaped.<sup>65</sup> On April 5, Puntland Finance Ministry official Abdi Gube survived an assassination attempt in Galkayo after his vehicle exploded.<sup>66</sup> On April 11, unknown gunmen shot and killed Galkayo airport immigration director Osman Hussein Haji Ismail ‘Farey’ in Galkayo. Al Shabaab group claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>67</sup>

On May 3, an attack on a Puntland forces outpost west of Galkayo was reported by local media to be committed by clan militias ‘loyal’ to Galmudug. Puntland’s Mudug Governor refuted the claim, alleging that they were a criminal gang that attempted to destabilise the

<sup>60</sup> Faysal Ali Ahmed. “Who is the presidential candidate that Farmajo is backing in Puntland”, *Muqdisho Online*, November 17, 2018. <https://muqdisho.online/waa-kuma-musharaxa-farmaajo-uu-wato-ee-puntland/>

<sup>61</sup> Between August 25 and November 27 of 2019, NAI recorded 5 instances where FGS airlifted SNA troops and FGS police to Galmudug.

<sup>62</sup> Puntland Situation Report February 2020, *New Access International*, 2020, pg 3, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, pg 2. Full audio of Taardhuleed’s speech can be accessed on: <https://goobjoog.com/dhageyso-galmudugoo-ee-deyn-culus-u-jeedisay-maamulka-puntland/>

<sup>64</sup> Puntland Situation Report February 2020, *New Access International*, 2020, pg 2. <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>65</sup> Puntland Situation Report March 2020, *New Access International*, 2020, pg3, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>66</sup> Puntland Situation Report April 2020, *New Access International*, 2020, pg 2, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

relationship between Galmudug and Puntland.<sup>68</sup> After surviving several assassination attempts dating back to 2015, Mudug Governor Ahmed Muse Nur and four other persons were killed on May 17, in a suicide bombing attack in Galkayo.<sup>69</sup> Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. Puntland Interior Minister Mohamed Dhabanad blamed the terror group for the attack but said Puntland officials “work in offices” and “do not sit behind reinforced concrete bunkers” – in what could be interpreted as a veiled reference to Federal Government officials working in high-security conditions in Mogadishu. The FGS and Galmudug officials condemned the attack.<sup>70</sup> On May 19, new fighting was reported between rival militias from Puntland and Galmudug near Teraage outpost west of Galkayo. It was the second time the two sides clashed since May 3.

**Incidents and Fatalities, Mudug Region, Somalia (2019-2020)**

TIME	LOCATION	INCIDENTS	FATALITIES
January-December 2019	North Mudug Region	37 <i>(3.08 incidents/month)</i>	162 <i>(13.5 fatalities/month)</i>
January-April 2020	North Mudug Region	11 <i>(2.75 incidents/month)</i>	22 <i>(5.5 fatalities/month)</i>

Source: NAI

Despite security setbacks, opportunities of cooperation between Galmudug and Puntland on security matters also took place in 2020. On April 4, cooperation thwarted an initial planned attack on the late Puntland Governor of Mudug.<sup>71</sup> Residents found an explosives vest in a landfill and notified Galmudug security forces, that quickly apprehended a thief who was reported to have left the vest after stealing it from a house in South Galkayo. A joint operation undertaken by Galmudug police, FGS Gaashaan Special Forces and Puntland Security Forces (PSF), then moved to apprehend two suspects living at the house in question.

Furthermore, Puntland President Deni has since also acknowledged President Qoorqoor publicly, indicating the possibility of rapprochement. On April 6, President Deni depicted the agreement between President Qoorqoor and his predecessor as positive and beneficial for the future of Galmudug.<sup>72</sup> He also stated that Puntland was pleased that the FGS allowed for groups within Galmudug to resolve their issues internally. On May 9, speaking from Qardo, President Deni told reporters that government forces had “increased security operations and awareness in Galkayo”, adding that he was “pleased” with communication with Galmudug President Ahmed Qoorqoor and federal senator Qeybdiid about improving interstate security cooperation in Mudug region.<sup>73</sup> The media also reported that Deni and Qoorqoor spoke via telephone shortly

<sup>68</sup> “Mudug Governor of Puntland speaks on assault on Puntland forces”, *Puntland Post*, May 3 2020, <https://puntlandpost.net/2020/05/03/puntland-oo-faahfaahin-ka-bixisay-dagaalkii-xalay-ka-dhacay-duleedka-gaalkacyo/>

<sup>69</sup> “Suicide bomb kills Somali Governor”, *VOA Somali*, May 17 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/suicide-bomb-kills-somali-governor>

<sup>70</sup> “Minister Dhabanad: ‘Puntland isn’t like other places where officials are protected by reinforced concrete.’”, *Goobjooge*, May 17 2020, <https://goobjooge.net/wasiir-dhabanad-puntland-la-mid-maaha-meelaha-masuuliyiinta-dhagxaan-shub-ah-ku-hoos-jiraan/>

<sup>71</sup> Puntland Situation Report April 2020, *New Access International*, 2020, pg 2, <https://www.naisomalia.com/reports-publications>

<sup>72</sup> “Deni speaks on Qoorqoor and Haaf meeting”, *Horseed Media*, April 6 2020, <https://horseedmedia.net/2020/04/06/deni-oo-ka-hadlay-kulankii-qoor-qoor-iyo-xaaf/>

<sup>73</sup> “Watch: Puntland president speaks on the situation of Galkayo and the strategy of terrorist organisations and warns of conflict”, *Puntland Times*, May 9 2020, <https://puntlandtimes.ca/2020/05/daawo-m-weynaha-puntland-oo-ka-hadlay-xaaladda-gaalkacyo-qorshaha-argagixisada-digniini-na-kasoo-saaray-dagaalada/>

after Deni’s statement.<sup>74</sup> On May 12, and only five days before Mudug Governor Nur was assassinated, officials from Puntland, Galmudug and SNA 21<sup>st</sup> Division held a “reconciliation meeting” between local clans hailing from the two states as part of wider reconciliation efforts in Mudug region.<sup>75</sup> The late Governor Nur, who spoke at the meeting, specifically stated that negative rhetoric from him and other officials was in fact detrimental to peace and cohesion in Mudug region, and he vowed not to engage in this rhetoric from that day onwards.<sup>76</sup> After the re-ignition of conflict in west Mudug on May 20, Puntland and Galmudug officials met at Teraage west of Galkayo and agreed to “ceasefire” and reconciliation conference to arbitrate the communal conflict in Teraage.<sup>77</sup>

## Conflict Impact on Mudug Region 2.0

The Galmudug election in 2019/2020 was somewhat different from 2015, especially with regards to social cohesion within Galmudug. The process pitted different groups against one another, each grounded in a different major community – and thus was inevitably corrosive to social cohesion in the region.

*“Galmudug was in its own transition period, which had taken a toll on the people. It was very divisive. There was a lot of uncertainty as to how the election would occur or what would happen if it went the way the federal government intended.”*

**Civil Society, Male, 36, Adaado**

*“We knew that the federal government wanted to have a lot of influence in this election. But this time it was more worrying because Galmudug had grown and became more complex. Also, Ahlu Sunna and Haaf first agreed, then retracted, claiming that the process was hijacked. Many people supported these politicians, causing this election to be very polarising.”*

**Nurse, Female, 32, South Galkayo**

One major difference between the two election processes was that, by 2019, Galmudug state’s land boundaries had been defined. This eliminated an important driver for controversy between the two neighbouring states. However, Puntland’s objection to the Galmudug state-building process in 2015 allowed for the extent of social fragmentation within Galmudug to go unnoticed. In 2019, Galmudug’s inter-group dynamics, along with the FGS’ interventions, dominated public perceptions of the elections. In light of this, the recent escalation of rhetoric appears somewhat ill-advised.

*“Many were surprised when Puntland blamed Galmudug for the conflict in Afbarwaqo and Towfiq. It seemed like Puntland did not really think it through and was saying what was convenient. It also does not help ease clan tensions, which are continuing to intensify.”*

**Businessman, 65, South Galkayo**

*“When the Puntland government makes accusations against Galmudug, it does not help to subdue tensions or resolve the issues of insecurity. It actually has the opposite effect.”*

**Trader, Male, 35, North Galkayo**

<sup>74</sup> “Deni and Qoorqoor speak on the phone about the situation in Galkayo”, *Puntland Post*, May 10 2020, <https://puntlandpost.net/2020/05/10/deni-iyo-qoor-qoor-oo-khadka-taleefonka-kaga-wada-hadlay-xiisad-ka-alooosan-gaalkacyo/>

<sup>75</sup> “An agreement reached between battling clans in Mudug”, *Goobjoog News*, May 12 2020, <https://goobjoog.com/hishiis-laga-gaaray-dagaal-beeleed-dhowaan-ka-dhacay-gobolka-mudug/>

<sup>76</sup> Puntland State TV, “Puntland State Minister of Justice holds a meeting with Galmudug and Puntland officials in Galkayo”, May 4 2020, video, 4:58, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_aiM18WFzNY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aiM18WFzNY&feature=youtu.be)

<sup>77</sup> “Puntland and Galmudug reach an agreement at the district of clashes”, *All Galgaduud*, May 21 2020, <http://www.allgalgaduud.net/2020/05/21/sawiro-galmudug-iyo-puntland-oo-heshiis-ku-gaaray-degaan-lagu-dagaalamay/>

For Puntland, the Galmudug elections had shifted the focus away from security of Mudug, much like in 2015. Al Shabaab’s assassination of the JSF commander in May 2019, one year after that of his predecessor, reversed this. A steady increase in communal clashes and the targeting of Puntland officials further underscore the importance of the region’s security and stability.

*“The security of the city is not improving. There have been a lot of killings in North Galkayo. People are afraid, movement is not like how it used to be. On top of assassinations comes crime. Women are afraid to go out, and even men are limiting their movements.”*

**Shopkeeper, Female, 41, North Galkayo**

*“Security is worsening. People do not go out like they did in the past, and are considerably more afraid for your safety than previously – not just on the Puntland side, but also on the Galmudug side. It seems that Galkayo is headed in the wrong direction.”*

**Mechanic, Male, 28, South Galkayo**

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## Social Cohesion, Conflict Transformation, and Reconciliation

### Roadblocks

Throughout this report, we noted that the FGS’ top-down political processes/policies and divisive rhetoric by FMS leaders have taken a toll on social cohesion within and among communities in Mudug region. The concept of social *cohesion* and its definition are contested among scholars and practitioners alike. The most often used definition is how often a group is in unity while working towards a goal.<sup>78</sup> Although this definition is not universally accepted, the inter- or intra-group *reciprocity* it implies, forms most uses of the concept. Social cohesion denotes the extent to which a social group or social groups work together. The Canadian government’s Social Cohesion Research Network has summarised the state of scholarship on social cohesion in the early 2000s as follows:

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*“Social cohesion appears to be based on the willingness of people in a society to cooperate with each other in the diversity of collective enterprises that members of a society must do in order to survive and prosper. Willingness to cooperate means they can and do freely choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realising them, because others are willing to cooperate as well. This, of course, implies a capacity to cooperate.”<sup>79</sup>*

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Jane Jenson described five dimensions of social cohesion [positive/negative]: recognition/rejection, belonging/isolation, legitimacy/illegitimacy, participation/non-

<sup>78</sup>Albert V. Carron, Lawrence R. Brawley, "Cohesion: Conceptual and measurement issues". Small Group Research. **31** (1): (2000), pg. 89–106

<sup>79</sup> Dick Stanley, “What Do We Know about Social Cohesion: The Research Perspective of the Government’s Social Cohesion Research Network”, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, (Winter 2003) pg. 5–17.

involvement, and inclusion/exclusion.<sup>80</sup> Mudug region’s conflict-ridden history, specifically in its shared capital, illustrates the negative dimensions.

- **Rejection and illegitimacy.** The mutual recognition of often clan-based state entities is central to the success of Somalia’s federal state building process. During the 2015 Galmudug State formation, the Puntland government feared encroachment on its jurisdictional boundaries, and initially rejected the legitimacy of Galmudug’s claimed state boundaries, as well as not conforming to the constitutional requirements for a new Federal Member State.
- **Non-involvement and isolation.** During this period, neither state engaged positively or constructively with the other. It is worth noting that the relationship between Galmudug and the FGS, and the federal government’s concomitant stand-off with the Puntland leadership, may have impeded attempts at interstate cooperation. Without channels for collaboration, Puntland and Galmudug, and especially the communities in North and South Galkayo, remained somewhat isolated, with further inter-communal animosities and clashes with Al Shabaab at its opposite border.<sup>81</sup>

The period between both electoral processes, conversely, saw greater interstate cooperation, and consequently a reduction in these negative trends. Instead, mutual recognition facilitated a shared sense of belonging and higher levels of inclusion and integration.<sup>82</sup> Elites in Mudug were able to assume ownership of the statebuilding process, rather than observing it driven by outside parties. The leadership’s dedication to improving security led to collaboration, affirming the procedural aspect of social cohesion, performative rather than appearing as a steady state.

This process, however, is fragile, especially in a fragmented country such as Somalia. Politics deeply impacts social cohesion despite the country’s weak government presence in rural areas and pervasive lack of capacity both at the federal and state levels, stemming from the composition of Somalia’s governments. Rather than a system based on political parties, Somalia’s consociational post-conflict arrangement has elevated clan membership to the both *de jure* and *de facto* – and the only – organising framework both at the state and federal level. The 4.5 formula, which is a derivative of the formulas used at state levels (Puntland), allocates parliamentary seats on the basis of clan lineage. Although the formula enabled political settlement during a fragile period, it also has now become a stumbling block to alternative modes of cooperation.

This entanglement of politics and clan identity has direct consequences for social cohesion, as the social construction of identity forms a principal building block of social cohesion. According to Henri Tajfel, a social identity implies “knowledge of [one’s] (individual) membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership.”<sup>83</sup> For centuries, Somali identity has been rooted in segmentary and agnatic blood lines.<sup>84</sup> A century before Somalia was carved up between the European

<sup>80</sup> Jane Jenson, “Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research.” *Canadian Policy Research Networks*, CPRN Study, (1998) pg. 15

<sup>81</sup> These includes communal conflict around Mataban with groups influential in the Hiraan region, Puntland’s continued hostilities with Somaliland at its eastern borders, and the presence of Al Shabaab in the areas around Ceel Bur and the Galgala mountains, as well as the more recent emergence of Da’esh near Bossasso.

<sup>82</sup> FGD respondents in Galmudug and Puntland stated that the recognition and willingness from the administrations to work together increased their feelings of belonging to the region and subsequently improved integration and inclusion within Galkayo and the Mudug region.

<sup>83</sup> Henri Tajfel. ‘*Human groups and social categories.*’ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.255, quoted by L. Huddy, “From group identity”. p.514.

<sup>84</sup> Cedric Barnes, ‘U dhashay—Ku dhashay: Genealogical and Territorial Discourse in Somali History.’ *Social Identities*, 12(4), (2006) 487-498.



colonialists, British explorers who visited the various sultanates that operated city-states widely spoke of the affinity to clan and blood lineage.<sup>85</sup>

The struggle for independence appeared to briefly overcome this, as the main political organisation of the time, the Somali Youth League (SYL), transcended clan lines. Following independence in 1960 and under a democratically elected civilian administration, social cohesion began to decline in the wake of corruption and mismanagement. Somali nationalism was, thus, “in large measure, an anti-colonial phenomenon, whose ultimate aim was to overthrow an unjust system of government”.<sup>86</sup>

In 1969, the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke was followed by an immediate military coup d’état led by Siyad Barre, a brigadier general of the army. The military and security apparatus initially gained traction among the wider public as they were perceived more trustworthy than the discredited former civilian administration. The new military regime harnessed Somali nationalism once again by banning any mention of clan affiliation in the Somali body politic and embarking on a war to reclaim Somali populated territories in neighbouring countries.

Yet, the swift and severe punishment of dissent and President Barre’s propensity to marginalise powerful elites gave rise to increasing opposition. This manifested in several political movements forming outside the country to overthrow the regime. Clinging to power, Barre resorted to clannism as a means of pitting his opponents against each other and gave free rein to his military to mete out collective punishment against perceived ‘collaborators’ – often equally along clan lines. By the time Barre fled Somalia, the country was descending into a civil war that unleashed the destructive clannism that the military regime had reinvigorated.

Using nationalism as a social identity has many drawbacks, but so does a social identity based on clan/lineage. The groups that emerged after the fall of the Barre dictatorship identified their membership not based on political ideals, community goals, wealth or status, but on bloodlines. This has led to political groups based largely on clan membership. The identity politics of the consociational 4.5 arrangement were not intended to be permanent. Ken Menkhaus observed that Somali political elites used – and continue to use – identity politics to mobilise and manipulate “clan anxieties and old disputes in pursuit of their political agendas”<sup>87</sup> – an observation that accurately captures the socio-political dynamics of Mudug region.

Internal cohesion can appear stable when solidified through an external threat. Reviewing the literature on this phenomenon, Arthur A. Stein found that external threats/conflicts indeed contribute to internal cohesion, but that such a threat or conflict alone is not sufficient to produce such an effect:

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*“The external conflict needs to involve some threat, affect the entire group and all its members equally and indiscriminately, and involve a solution (or at least there must be a useful purpose in group efforts regarding the threat). The group needs to have been an ongoing one with some pre-existing cohesion or consensus, and to have a*

<sup>85</sup> Richard Burton. *First Footsteps in East Africa; Or, an Exploration of Harar*. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans 1856), <https://www.wollamshram.ca/1001/East/east.htm>

<sup>86</sup> Hassan Mahaddala, ‘Pithless nationalism: the Somali case’, ed. A.M. Kusow, *Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 2004.), p. 60.

<sup>87</sup> Ken Menkhaus, “Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Somalia Case Study.” DFID Stabilisation Unit, (2018), 10

*leadership that can authoritatively enforce cohesion (especially if all the members of the group do not feel the threat). The group must be able to deal with the external conflict, and to provide emotional comfort and support to its members.”<sup>88</sup>*

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In applying this lens to the conflict in Mudug region, several parallels appear:

1. **Threat to the group:** in the lead up to the state building and electoral processes, both Puntland and Galmudug regarded one another as a threat to their own existence, one as a potential encroachment compromising border security and control over Galkayo, the other as a challenge to its formation and its constitutional legitimacy. Given both states’ grounding in shared social identity, this perception swiftly encapsulated all residents in Puntland and Galmudug, and implied that the only measure to ensure group survival (read: clan) was to confront the threat.
2. **Pre-existing cohesion:** The relative homogeneity among clans that make up Galmudug, predominantly Habar Gidir/Hawiye, and Puntland, predominantly Harti/Darood, contributed to the formation of each state. Leadership in both states is simultaneously centralised and to a certain degree also decentralised due to various clan elders whose allegiance and pressure on state leaders ebb and flow.<sup>89</sup> Each has in the past contributed to a base-level of internal cohesion, more fragile in the recently formed Galmudug state.
3. **Leadership:** Clan elders hold significant power, but their inescapable involvement in politics has rendered many vulnerable to be easily swayed by the political elites they helped elect in the first place. Peace scholar John Paul Lederach observed: “A clearly defined and immediately present enemy and the perception that the group’s survival is at stake inspire uncritical support of the group’s leadership. ‘If we do not dominate, we will be dominated’ becomes a leitmotif.”<sup>90</sup>

In 2015/2016, Somalia faced simultaneous crises: severe drought, fraught national elections, and growing insecurity, specifically in Mudug. Administrations in Puntland and Galmudug offered conflicting interpretations as to what and who was causing insecurity. Puntland believed that insecurity in Galkayo was fomented by Galmudug and to some extent the FGS. Galmudug, on the other hand, believed that Puntland was exploiting the insecurity to undermine its very existence and attack its state forces.

During this period, neither state leader enjoyed popular support on internal matters. In 2020, these issues persist. Political leaders in Galmudug have accused Puntland of undermining its state election, while Puntland leaders claim that Galmudug state is stoking clan conflict and contributing to instability in the region. Meanwhile, the region of Mudug continues to receive weapons while a national election looms and insecurity continues to rise in Galkayo. The dearth of lasting gains reflects a lack of meaningful conflict transformation and reconciliation since the civil war.

## Avenues Towards Peace

Somalis frequently attribute the persistence of conflict to a lack of ‘real reconciliation.’ Rather, aspects of reconciliation have been carried out on an *ad hoc* basis. *Reconciliation* and its usage in Somali circles exhibits a misunderstanding of the term and what it entails. Like many of the key

<sup>88</sup> Arthur Stein, “Conflict and Cohesion: A Review of Literature.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 20 (1) (1976), 165

<sup>89</sup> “Political elites effectively mobilise and manipulate clan anxieties and old disputes in pursuit of their agendas, but are also constrained by clan dynamics.” See: Menkhaus. *Elite Bargains*, 8

<sup>90</sup>John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (Washington D.C.: USIP, 1997), 15

concepts in peace and conflict studies, the definition of reconciliation is broad and usually geared towards improving social relationships.

- Lederach, a pioneer of the theory of conflict transformation, argued that reconciliation "is built on and oriented toward the relational aspects of a conflict [...] and create[s] an encounter where people can focus on their relationship."<sup>91</sup>
- De Gruchy also depicts reconciliation as relationship-centric as it “implies a fundamental shift in personal and power relations.”<sup>92</sup>

Any such sustainable ‘fundamental shift’ in human relations, especially in a situation of protracted and violent social conflict, needs time and commitment to rebuild trust and dispel fear. Put differently, reconciliation implies a lengthy process and permeates all levels of society. In Somalia, this has yet to materialise.

Since the 1990s, Somalia has rebuilt its governance structures based on a federalist and decentralised system. Yet, federalism has been interpreted differently by the FGS and the FMS, and has ultimately produced political processes marred by confrontation stemming from the very distrust and fear that would require careful and committed reconciliation. This quandary has been compounded by violent extremist groups and criminal networks. Ironically, the federal structure of Somalia built entirely on clan dynamics has deposited the divisive spectre of clan on the centre stage, and anchored both administration and development in it. As a result, political processes such as national elections and state building continuously test and strain clan relations and social cohesion.

Somalia’s fragile governance and inability to finance a lengthy reconciliation process, which if genuine must hold many current and former political leaders accountable, means that such a process is unlikely to occur in the current context. A process focused on conflict transformation instead presents a more feasible approach, and organically integrates aspects of reconciliation. Conflict transformation and reconciliation are similar as both emphasise relationships and are forward looking. Many aspects of reconciliation are embedded in conflict transformation processes, and experts and practitioners frequently combine the two.<sup>93</sup> Yet, for many years, external peacebuilding efforts in Somalia have focused more on conflict resolution – settling issues definitively rather than reframing them in a non-violent manner – instead of conflict transformation/reconciliation. Notwithstanding, conflict transformation has been undertaken by a few international organisations in Somalia.<sup>94</sup>

There are distinct differences between conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Actors engaged in conflict resolution, as described by Hugh Miall, one of the discipline’s founding scholars:<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Lederach, *Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 30

<sup>92</sup> John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 25

<sup>93</sup> John Paul Lederach, “*The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 143-7.

<sup>94</sup> Organizations such as Danish Demining Group (DDG) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) as well as Oxfam have implemented reconciliation programmes in Somalia. But with regards to conflict transformation specifically Oxfam has incorporated conflict transformation into its 2011-2015 business plan and has focused on transforming conflicts.

<sup>95</sup> Hugh Miall, “Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task.” In: Austin A., Fischer M., Ropers N. (eds) *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict*. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004) pp 67-89

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*“Seek to explore what the roots of the conflict really are and to identify creative solutions that the parties may have missed in their commitment to entrenched positions.”*

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Miall suggests that conflict transformation theorists are not looking for ideal or positive-sum (win-win) outcomes, but call into question the structures of parties and relationships, which:<sup>96</sup>

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*“May be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships that extend beyond the particular site of conflict. Conflict transformation is therefore a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict.”*

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With regards to Mudug, practices of conflict resolution have been prioritised and applied as conflicts arose, and ignored the contextual complexities that drive and perpetuate the conflict. With each successful cessation of armed violence, conflict would go into remission for some time, but its underlying contradiction would be allowed to persist. The continually evolving political dynamics led to the mutation of the contradiction into conflict with severe impact on the region’s communities. Despite some intermittent progress, many of the same challenges remain with the potential to escalate into yet another violent and multi-layered conflict.

## Recommendations for Peace

The founder of peace studies, Johan Galtung, posited that conflict dynamics can be stratified into attitudes, behaviour, and their underlying contradiction.<sup>97</sup> Miall added that the collective and individual memory, specific relations among actors, and context must be understood as well.<sup>98</sup> Building on this six-fold analytical model, Vayrynen proposed four avenues for conflict transformation<sup>99</sup>:

<p><b>1. Actor Transformations</b></p> <p>Internal changes in parties, or the appearance of new parties/leaders, changes in goals. It includes decisions on the part of actors to change their goals or alter their general approach to conflict.</p>
<p><b>2. Issue Transformations</b></p> <p>Altering the agenda of conflict issues; de-linking or re-linking issues. It concerns the reformulations of positions that parties take on key issues at the heart of the conflict as well as the way in which parties redefine or reframe those positions in order to reach compromises or resolutions.</p>

<sup>96</sup>Ibid

<sup>97</sup>Galtung, Johan. "Introduction: peace by peaceful conflict transformation—the TRANSCEND approach." In *Handbook of peace and conflict studies*, pp. 30-48. Routledge, 2007.

<sup>98</sup> Hugh Miall, *Conflict Transformation* pg 75

<sup>99</sup> The table is adapted from Hugh Miall’s take on Vayrynen’s four avenues for conflict transformation. Although Hugh Miall does include Rule Transformation in his five transformations., he does allude to it in his report on conflict transformation. Hugh, Miall, *Conflict Transformation* pg 76-77

<p><b>3. Rule Transformations</b></p> <p>Changes in the norms or rules governing a conflict. It refers to the changes of norms of the parties' interactions, redefining the unwritten rules of how parties interact with each other.</p>
<p><b>4. Structural Transformations</b></p> <p>The entire structure of relationships and power distribution in the conflict is transformed. Refer to changes in the basic structure of the conflict that is to the set of actors, their issues, incompatible goals and relationships, or to the society, economy or state within which the conflict is embedded.</p>

Given the complexity of peacebuilding, adaptability is indispensable. Rigid approaches to peacebuilding have increasingly proven non-effective and their sustainability has been called into question, especially in fragile and evolving contexts such as Somalia. Lederach stated “peacebuilding is about *generating adaptive and dynamic processes.*”<sup>100</sup> Cedric de Coning has brought adaptive peacebuilding to the forefront describing it as: “an approach in which peacebuilders, together with the communities and people affected by the conflict, actively engage in a structured effort to sustain peace by employing an iterative process of learning and adaptation.”<sup>101</sup> Following Vayrynen four areas of conflict transformation, this report proposes a series of recommendations that will transform the contradictory dynamics that exist. The recommendations will incorporate how each proposed intervention addresses the Miall and Galtung’s six-fold analytical model, while adhering to the principles of adaptive peacebuilding.

## 1. Actor Transformation

- 1.1. **Recognising Legitimacy:** Both Deni and Qoorqoor are new leaders of their respective states fitting the criteria of actor transformation. Yet both have inherited **memories** their constituents hold that impact their current **attitudes**. One way of dispelling these memories and changing attitudes is by recognising each other’s legitimacy. The statement by former Puntland President Farole requesting that Deni recognise Qoorqoor as Galmudug president is one way to indicate that Deni is a different actor than his predecessor, with a different set of goals. Deni has in a press statement alluded to Qoorqoor’s legitimacy calling him president, but a formal process would dispel any inkling of doubt. This would present opportunities for the two to meet, discuss and develop tangible ways to improve their relations, despite having divergent relationships with the FGS.
- 1.2. **New Local Peacebuilding Actors:** Non-state actors are especially important to peace processes worldwide and have been crucial in Somalia. UNSOM and AMISOM were pivotal in supporting and sustaining the Joint Police Patrol, also known as the JSF, which comprises of Galmudug and Puntland police forces.<sup>102</sup> But more interestingly, it was new actors such as Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS), a policy and research institute based in Somalia, who recommended a joint security task-force, months before it was created.<sup>103</sup> This task-force was crucial in enhancing security and promoting cooperation. Albeit, it cannot definitively be stated that the recommendation by HIPS was the reason the task-force was created, however, it indicates that new local

<sup>100</sup> Lederach, *Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, pg 131

<sup>101</sup> Cedric De Coning, “Adaptive peacebuilding”, *International Affairs* 94 (2), 301-317, (2018): pg 317

<sup>102</sup> “Building Bridges, UNSOM and AMISOM Launch Joint Police Patrol.” *UNSOM*, July 18, 2017, <https://unsom.unmissions.org/building-bridges-unsom-and-amisom-launch-joint-police-patrol-training-gaalkacyo>

<sup>103</sup> In December 2016 HIPS called for joint non-political commission as well as joint security task-force. It was later created in July 2017. HIPS, *Gaalkacyo Conflict*, 7

non-state actors were recommending solutions that had changed **behaviours** and with it **relations**. As new problems emerge, new locally grounded actors with new approaches are necessary within the peacebuilding arena.

- 1.3. **New International Peacebuilding Actors:** New approaches to peace were implemented after the fallout of the Galkayo conflict, with relatively new actors, such as Somali Stability Fund (SSF), prioritising initiatives that focused on inclusion and dialogue but also sustainability beyond project funding. Initiatives included construction of community centres for youth to engage in dialogue and strengthening cooperation between the respective Chambers of Commerce to promote peace within the business community and their administrations. The initiatives sought to activate more inclusive actors, such as youth, women and the business community.<sup>104</sup> Students from both sides who marched in Galkayo in 2016 were influential in transforming **behaviours** and ultimately **relations**.<sup>105</sup> The business community was also an important group during the Galkayo conflict by utilising their business **relations** between north and south Galkayo to promote peace and call an end to hostilities. Finally, women’s role in peacebuilding in Somalia is second to none as they have been crucial in transforming conflict by strengthening inter-clan ties for time immemorial.<sup>106</sup> These groups were activated by SSF and its partners, such as Conflict Dynamics International (CDI) and its local partners PUNCHAD and Ocean. However, the initial successes of the new approaches to implementation and the negative peace that formed during project implementation should not be interpreted as lasting results. New and old peacebuilding actors will constantly have to redefine their approaches and adapt effectively to ensure that they can transform conflict into sustained peace.

## 2. Issue Transformation

- 2.1. **Changing how Peacebuilders Analyse Conflict:** Non-state actors who conduct peacebuilding initiatives rely on conflict analysis in Somalia. This analysis formulates the basis of what interventions are implemented and what **contextual** or **contradictory** issues are assuaged. This analysis often uses tools such as conflict analysis, which are vital but cannot be interpreted as a comprehensive understanding of a conflict-affected social system. De Coning suggests the planning and programming that is conducted from these analyses need to factor in the provisional nature of the available knowledge.<sup>107</sup> As a result, a more accurate analysis is not one that is pre-defined in a determined-design programme cycle but one that is a continuously iterative process.<sup>108</sup> Conflict analysis of the issues peacebuilding actors focus on in Somalia cannot be comprehensive if the analysis is not iterative in essence, beyond the rigid baseline, midline and endline programmatic assessment phases. This has, to a certain degree, been theoretically prioritised by international organisations who more recently adopted key concepts, such as ‘problem driven iterative approaches’ and ‘adaptive programming’ when developing country programmes, but analysis of peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions is often from the vantage point of the intervener rather than the intervened. As Gelot and Soderbaum argue “the intent is to explain what went well or less well and to improve the

<sup>104</sup> FGD respondents

<sup>105</sup> FGD respondents

<sup>106</sup> Ahmed Yusef Farah, *The Roots of Reconciliation* (London: Action Aid, 1993).

<sup>107</sup> Cedric De Coning, “Adaptive peacebuilding”, *International Affairs* 94 (2), 301-317, (2018): pg 9

<sup>108</sup> Ibid pg 9

instruments for intervention.”<sup>109</sup> For programming to improve and continue to be relevant and sustainable, the analysis or assessment of interventions implemented should link the perspectives of both the interverner and the intervened upon. A vital step to accurately undertaking issue transformation is ensuring that the **contextual** issues that accentuate **contradictory** behaviours are iteratively factored into locally grounded analysis to ensure that relevant peacebuilding interventions are implemented and adapted effectively.

- 2.2. **Issue Transformation at the Political Arena:** The issues within the political arena are often understood by peacebuilding practitioners to have a significant impact on social cohesion. However, donors and international organisations that operate in statebuilding seem to be occasionally oblivious to the impact that strained relations between the FGS and FMS and major political processes have on peace within Somalia. This is typically seen as a political dispute that is detrimental to national development and political settlement, and not necessarily equated with having direct impact on the community level. However, this research analysis shows that there is a distinct correlation with the disintegration of relationships between the centre and periphery, vital political processes and the disintegration of security in Galkayo and the wider Mudug region. The outlook of peace being essentially political and local has gained traction over the past years, with the UN reviewing its peacebuilding architecture to incorporate political accompaniment.<sup>110</sup> However, this newly adopted policy has not translated in significantly altering UN-endorsed political processes that have largely been ineffective and contributed to fragmenting political and social cohesion in Somalia.<sup>111</sup> Re-linking political issues of **contradiction** between the centre and periphery and including it into the comprehensive **contextual** analysis of communal conflict, will transform the issues from rudimentary analysis to one more closer to the complex truth, with political processes having direct implications on social cohesion and peace in the country. Scrutinising political processes from the standpoint of impact on peace could precipitate the basis for more community inclusion in important political processes.

### 3. Rule Transformation

- 3.1. **Political Cohesion through Cooperation:** When the context of conflict is properly analysed, then the rules that govern the relationship can be identified and subjected to change. Redefining the norms of interactions has been attempted with great success. The JSF of Puntland and Galmudug forces were crucial in building **relations** between the two sides and altering their **behaviour** to improve security in Galkayo. The forces were also widely welcomed by the public on both sides who viewed the joint forces as a testament that interstate cooperation was not impossible.<sup>112</sup> This type of cooperation needs to be continued and can be achieved by the two new administrations of Puntland and Galmudug further pledging their support for the joint forces. Cooperation between the two sides is the first step in building political cohesion, which is underpinned by

<sup>109</sup> Linnea Gelot and Fredrik Söderbaum. ‘Intervenors and intervened upon: the missing link in building peace and avoiding conflict’, in Hanne Fjelde and Kristine Höglund, eds, *Building peace, creating conflict? Conflictual dimensions of local and international peace-building* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2011), p. 77.

<sup>110</sup> UN, *The challenge of sustaining peace: report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture*, A/69/968-S/2015/490 (New York, 2015).

<sup>111</sup> Constitutional process in Somalia has been underway since 2012 and yet the constitution is still provisional. At least two UN-backed programmes have been carried out each with millions of dollars being funnelled into the review and finalisation process. However, the Constitutional Review Process has been an area of contention with FMS calling the FGS out for not taking the process seriously. The process has continued to hinder relations between the FMS and FGS while constantly being questioned for value of money. See Puntland Government Policy *On Constitutional Review Process of the Federal Republic of Somalia*.

<sup>112</sup> FGD respondents from both South and North Galkayo.

security cooperation, given the threat violent extremist organisations pose to both administrations in Mudug. The past achievements of the joint forces to improve local security, resulted in peace spoilers specifically targeting and assassinating the first two commanders of the JSF in Galkayo within two years. If Puntland and Galmudug want to maintain peace, they will need to realise that avenues for cooperation need to be prioritised.

- 3.2. **New Crises, New Opportunities:** In order to successfully transform the rules that govern the conflict, redefining how the two parties interact is crucial, thus finding ways that the two sides can work together beyond security cooperation is paramount to transforming conflict. The COVID-19 global pandemic presents opportunities for the two states to transform the **relationship** by changing their **behaviour** with regard to how they deal with national issues, such as the pandemic. Galmudug and Puntland will need to work together to develop strategies in unison that govern both sides of Galkayo to prevent the exponential spread of COVID-19. According to the late Puntland Mudug Governor Ahmed Muse Nur who stated that South Galkayo was not implementing curfews, which ultimately contributed to the proliferation of the khat trade that Puntland had banned.<sup>113</sup> If the two fail at coming up with joint COVID-19 policies within Galkayo, and continue implementing standalone strategies, the outbreak of COVID-19 and its spread could potentially be another issue of contention.

#### 4. Structural Transformation

- 4.1. **Rethinking Statebuilding:** The statebuilding processes in Somalia are often controversial and the trend has continued to lean towards top-down processes, and the implications of this are detailed in this report. In order for conflicts to transform, the structures that allow for the conflict to intensify by further stoking negative **memories** and **attitudes** will need to be addressed. Processes, such as state elections, will need to be free of FGS interference whether overtly or covertly. This can be done by introducing new laws that prevent FGS interference or the growing trend of foreign meddling in Somali politics. It is imperative that all stakeholders agree that such interference is against the principles of good governance, although such interference will be difficult to ascertain and prosecute. The restructuring of state elections is essential in building and maintaining peace, but more importantly reducing any issues that can further hinder social cohesion and exacerbate fault lines within the fragile relationships amongst clans in Somalia. The FGS and FMS will have to cooperate in this endeavour, which will likely be a lengthy process with a lot of pushback from the FGS. But given the fragility of Somalia, state elections marred by interference from the FGS will do less to help its legitimacy and will only be used as fodder to fuel discontent with perceived centralist policies.
- 4.2. **Administrative and Economic Cooperation:** Since the civil war, Galkayo has been subdivided into two enclaves that rarely work together, nor have there been other forms of cooperation, apart from security which has declined as of late. Scrapping the current two administrations for one federal territory has been recommended by think-tanks,<sup>114</sup> but mechanising these recommendations into reality has not been thoroughly analysed. Getting the two states to forgo their administration of a district that is lucrative for a federal territory is a long shot, and will likely not happen in the near future. However,

<sup>113</sup>“Mudug Governor escapes assassination attempt,” *Daljir Media*, April 04, 2020, video, 5:38, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGa1DYGWG9I&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>114</sup> HIPS, *Gaalkacyo Conflict*, pg 7



getting the two states to amend how they currently administer services is more plausible, given the history of coexistence and shared cultural customs. Administratively, the two sides working together on issues of security, health, taxation and justice, is not farfetched and can be done provided that there is commitment by both parties. The administrations conduct these tasks separately and there are areas of synergy that can be capitalised upon. Identifying synergy areas and developing joint initiatives will transform the administrative silos that currently remain supreme. Outside of the realm of governance, one such area of cooperation is commerce. Businesses in north and south Galkayo have always had some cooperation while maintaining healthy competition, albeit competition in commerce can also be attributed to drivers of conflict within the region. Commerce and competition and the role of governance have resurfaced as a contentious issue, after Puntland’s recent attempt to enforce a sales tax in north Galkayo.<sup>115</sup> Given North and South Galkayo have different tax regimes, the introduction of new taxes on one part of the demographic will not sit well with the public and has the potential to compound existing conflict drivers. Shortly after the attempt to enforce the tax, businesses in North Galkayo protested, and the implementation was postponed. Instead of siloed policies, Galkayo would benefit from a common tax regime that ensures that there is a level playing field, crucial to removing one of the conflict drivers. But before joint tax policies can be implemented, the administrations should undertake a joint research study to establish what existing areas of commerce can be enhanced and what joint policies will foster commerce. The enhancing of commerce and trade between north and south will be the necessary precursor to implementing a common tax regime.

This is an initiative that both Galmudug and Puntland administrations can play an instrumental role in developing, along with the local business community who were paramount in uniting for peace during the 2016 conflict. The support for a Joint Chamber of Commerce in Galkayo was by in large an ad-hoc committee setup by international stakeholders which had initial successes in improving relations; yet, it has largely withered off.<sup>116</sup> Sustainable areas of cooperation that are distinct are required to strengthen **relations** and change **behaviours** during periods of negative peace.

- 4.3. **Reforming Xeer Law:** Extensive literature on Somalia has cited the lack of accessible and accountable justice institutions as a conflict driver in Somalia. Pre-colonialism, Somalis adjudicated themselves largely with *Xeer*, the indigenous form of law. In its heyday, *Xeer* was in fact meticulously clear while maintaining its complexity by constantly incorporating precedence and clan agreements. This gave *Xeer* the ability to adapt while maintaining a highly decentralised system. The breadth of *Xeer* is extensive covering topics such as environmental law (forest and water), pastoral law, economic laws including regulations on commodities (frankincense), and marine and maritime laws.<sup>117</sup> Since colonialism, *Xeer*’s fundamentals have continued to be eroded, with terms such as *Xeer Jajab* being coined in the past century, which literally translates to ‘broken law’. *Xeer Jajab*’s eminence within society can be traced back to colonialism where

<sup>115</sup> PSR, Feb 2020. NAI.

<sup>116</sup> FGD respondents who participated in the chamber of commerce initiatives state that the activities revolved around the project implementation period. The project was carried out by CDI which did propose an Options Paper for longer term management of Galkayo with key stakeholders from both administrations and the federal government as well as international partners. However, the few respondents who had seen the options paper stated that recommendations were not acted upon.

<sup>117</sup> *Somali Customary Law and Traditional Economy: Cross Sectional, Pastoral, Frankincense and Marine Norms*, Puntland Development Research Centre, (August 2003),

colonial powers, more specifically Italian-administered Somaliland, attempted to eradicate *Xeer*.<sup>118</sup> Coupled by urbanisation that surged in nascent inland towns, new urban figures emerged from these settings. These Somalis were not deeply familiar with the traditional *Xeer* system, yet from time to time, were tasked by their clansmen and colonial authorities to settle contemporary clan disputes and issues in urban centres.<sup>119</sup>

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Xeer* had to be flexible and adaptive as its decentralised judicial structure was under threat. Compounded with urbanisation and the colonial demand for livestock, an erosion of the punitive aspects of *Xeer* gave way to a trend of negotiated settlements. After the collapse of the central government in 1991, *Xeer* regained its prominence as it was a vital mechanism in negotiating settlements in a tumultuous period which saw unprecedented clan conflict. But its focus on conflict resolution by negotiating unprecedented settlements continued to dilute an already weakened *Xeer* system. Meanwhile, as Somali governments were rebuilding, more international aid was funnelled into the formal justice processes, while *Xeer* was supported and used primarily as a means of conflict resolution. Since then, the formal justice sector has seen credible gains but largely at the expense of *Xeer*. The transition of *Xeer* from stringent punitive measures to a predilection towards compensatory measures, especially with regards to murder and loss of life may be considered adaptation but can also be construed as erosion, (as its main function became conflict resolution with monetary settlements).

The new *Xeer* was stress tested by extraordinary levels of conflict, coinciding with major political processes, which has in turn impacted its ability to resolve conflict and adjudicate disputes definitively. Over time, this resulted in more citizens having negative dispositions towards *Xeer* and its ability to provide justice.<sup>120</sup> *Xeer* is an exclusively administered justice process, presided by clan elders, also called *Odayaal* or collectively as *Guurti*, with little to no room for youth and women. One of the key aspects of *Xeer* was its transparency allowing the community to oversee arbitration.<sup>121</sup> Yet, it has continued to become less transparent with most arbitration occurring outside of the public eye as of late.<sup>122</sup> *Xeer*'s intrinsic value to Somalia has been realised by external and internal stakeholders alike, but since the collapse of the central government, it has been unsuccessful in transitioning to fit the new era Somalia has entered and maintain the public's confidence. Attempts to make *Xeer* more accessible and inclusive have increasingly become target areas for international organisations. Danish Demining Group (DDG) has been implementing programmes concentrating on increasing inclusivity, creating synergies with other justice mechanisms and enhancing capacity of elders to resolve disputes before they turn violent. The initiatives have created the *Guurti+* which are more inclusive arbitration bodies that have incorporated “women, youth and minority clans.”<sup>123</sup> Whilst also building the capacity of the *Guurti* to preside over newer litigation. Attempts at reforming and adapting *Xeer*, to fit the current context

<sup>118</sup> Spencer Heath MacCallum. *The Rule of Law without the State*. Mises Institute: Austrian Economics, Freedom, and Peace, (2007, December 09), <https://mises.org/library/rule-law-without-state>

<sup>119</sup> KIIs and FGDs with elders in Garowe, November 2019.

<sup>120</sup> FGD with youth and women in Galkayo, December 2019.

<sup>121</sup> FGDs with youth, women, business community and IDPs, January 2020

<sup>122</sup> FGDs with youth, women, business community and IDPs, January 2020

<sup>123</sup> Robin Mydlak, “Engagement of Somali Customary Institutions in Justice Programs: Establishing a Knowledge Base,” Forcier Consulting, Danish Demining Group, DFID (September 2019)

are vital and should be enhanced. *Xeer*'s ability to adapt as witnessed in the past century is its underlying strength.

The necessary transformations that need to be made are many and cannot be stated in this report. However, initially *Xeer* will have to regain its transparency and accountability which can be done by incorporating technology into *Xeer* arbitrations to allow concerned citizens, *Mag* (blood money) paying groups abroad and domestic, and various stakeholders to view or listen using social media platforms. This allows elders and others to transform their **relations** with their constituents and the wider community and vice versa. This can further lead to the establishment of embedded civilian oversight committees for all *Xeer* processes, instilling a collective social accountability that can ultimately improve **behaviours** amongst clans in Mudug region and possibly Somalia. Furthermore, initiatives that enhance inclusivity are vital in adapting to the current **context** where predominantly youth are perpetrators and victims of clan conflict and reversing negative **memories** excluded groups may have about *Xeer*. Lastly, clans in Mudug and their use of *Xeer* and the more inclusive group that can potentially administer it, will have to agree to reform various aspects of *Xeer* that through its current ambiguity fuels the **contradiction** rather than addressing it. **Contextual** issues that exacerbate the contradiction, such as the standardisation of *Mag* regardless of stature, ensuring victims' choice with regards to compensation or penalisation and how these finances are allocated, will be crucial to the structural transformation needed. Spencer MacCullum wrote that the “*Xeer* takes its place among such great legal systems of the world as the Roman law, the English common law, the Law Merchant, and the Jewish traditional law (Halacha).”<sup>124</sup> Efforts in harnessing and adapting this legal system that has governed Somalia for so long is extremely vital to the structural transformation needed to move Mudug region and the rest of Somalia past conflictual relationships.

## Conclusion

There are many parallels between the 2015 Galmudug state formation process and the 2019/2020 Galmudug election process. Heavy-handed involvement of the FGS and social rifts within Galmudug were more apparent in 2019/2020, but the political relationship between Puntland-Galmudug-FGS was identical. The dispute between the FGS and Puntland continues unabated, and the upcoming 2020/2021 national elections in Somalia form a major point of contention. The FGS support for Galmudug and deployment of SNA troops, Puntland's public remonstrations, targeted killings, insurgent attacks, and clan clashes catalyse the situation's overall deterioration. As Galtung asserted, the basic aspect of peace is relations. Political processes that were led by the FGS have had an adverse impact in relations, both in-groups and out-groups, within Mudug region. This has led to a breakdown in security, which has in the past led to conflict. Nevertheless, interstate cooperation to improve security remains possible, and as of late, political leaders of Galmudug and Puntland have indicated more willingness for cooperation, reversing the previous trend witnessed in 2015/2016.

For this cooperation to occur, NAI calls for a concerted iterative effort by all stakeholders to engage in locally grounded solutions to conflict, which transforms relations at the political and

<sup>124</sup> MacCullum. *The Rule of Law without the State*.

community-level to ensure sustainable peace. In addition to political processes, customary practices, *Xeer* indigenous law and the role of clan elders will also need to be reformed to enact structural transformations, which will contribute positively to lasting peace among communities. This will require commitment from all the parties involved. The late Mudug governor, days before his death, vowed not to engage in any acts that hurt communal and political relations. Top-down and bottom-up transformations of this sort are imperative to lifting Mudug region out of a cycle of violence that spoilers are actively undermining. Stakeholders will need to commit themselves to these values and the recommendations detailed in this report lay the blueprint for how these types of transformations can occur. As national elections loom, major political processes and the stakeholders that lead them will need to make social cohesion the priority, and not an afterthought.