

# The Contribution of Local Leaders in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Mogdishu - Somalia

Hassan Mohamed Yusuf "UKUMEY"

Head of Training Department, Somali National University

**Abstract:** *The Main purpose of this article was to explore the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogdishu Somalia; specifically the core objectives will be, to find out the level of their contribution, to identify the strategies used by local leaders in peace building process in Mogdishu, Somalia, and to investigate the challenges face local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building process in Mogdishu, Somalia. The sample size of this Article was eighty (80) respondents including local leaders, women and youth organizations. In this Article the sample was reached through the Slovin's formula. The study was conducted through descriptive research design and used questionnaires as the main instrument for collecting data. Data was analyzed using SPSS by assessing the frequency of respondents per question. The findings of this Article show the level of contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building process in Somalia. Lastly the Article found that there are efforts, challenges, and suggested solution in order to build peace and order in the country. The Article recommends that: The government should establish peace and reconciliation conferences including all parts involved in the conflict within the country. Local leaders in Somalia should strengthen the community's capacity to deal with conflict resolution, In order to reduce the effects of the armed violence.*

**Keywords:** Political Sciences and Peace building

## 1. Introduction

Somali Democratic Republic is located in northeast Africa, in the region known as the Horn of Africa. Its neighbors include Djibouti to the northwest, Ethiopia to the west and Kenya to the southwest. To the north, the Gulf of Aden separates it from the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean borders its eastern and southern regions. There are about 8 million Somalis, 60 percent of whom are pastoral nomads. The Somalis are united by a common language, a common culture, and the Islamic religion, but they are deeply divided among various clans. Inter-clan hostility has always been a source of conflict for the country and is responsible for a twenty-year civil war (1990-2010) that completely disabled the nation and its educational system. As of the year 2001, efforts are still being made by concerned Somalis and international organizations to reestablish a central government in Somalia.

The failures of many national reconciliation conferences had adversely affected the aspirations of many residents in Somalia. It is almost two decades since the disintegration of the central government of Somalia many innocent civilian including women, children and elderly people suffered from multiple social, political and economic illnesses.

According to Menkhuas, (1992) Somalia's conflict reveals an intriguing inconsistency namely; many of the factors that drive armed conflict have also played a role in managing, ending, or preventing war. Most of Somalia's armed clashes since 1991 have been fought in the name of clan, often as a result of political leaders manipulating clannish for their own purposes. However local leaders are a primary source of conflict mediation, clan-based customary law serves as the basis for negotiated settlements, and clan-based blood-payment groups serve as a deterrent to armed violence.

The central state is conventionally viewed as a potential source of rule of law and peaceful allocation of resources, but, at times in Somalia's past, it was a source of violence and predation. Economic interests, too, have had an ambiguous relationship with conflict in Somalia. In some places, where economies have emerged that perpetuate violence and lawlessness, while in other instances business interests have been a driving force for peace, stability, and rule of law. The conflicts among Somali clans and sub clans seem to be a quest for political power and positions in a potential of new government (Menkhuas, 1992).

The objectives of this this article will be as follows:

- 1) To identify the level of the contribution of Somali local leader in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogdishu, Somali.
- 2) To identify the strategies used by local leaders in peace building process in Mogdishu, Somalia.
- 3) To investigate the challenges face local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building process in Mogdishu, Somalia.

## 2. Methodology

### Method and materials

The Article used a descriptive design by using quantitative approach to quantify incidences and to describe the current conditions and also to investigate the role of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building gained from the respondents.

The target populations that participate this Article are Local leaders, Local-NGO, Woman and youth organizations. With the total of 100.

The minimum sample size is 80 respondents and was computed using the Slovin's formula which is  $n = \frac{N}{1+N}$

Volume 10 Issue 4, April 2021

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(0.05<sup>2</sup>), where n= sample size, N= study population and 0.05= level of significance margin of error (Amin, 2005).

**Table 1:** The target respondents to be used in the study

| No    | Population Category                 | Population | Sample Size |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1     | Local Non-governmental Organization | 25         | 20          |
| 2     | Local leaders and religious leaders | 30         | 24          |
| 3     | Women empowerment communities       | 25         | 20          |
| 4     | Youth Organization                  | 20         | 16          |
| Total |                                     | 100        | 80          |

The Author of this Article employed purposive sampling technique to select respondents who are highly knowledgeable and experienced in conflict resolution in Mogadishu, Somalia. While the Author used Questionnaire and interview as instruments.

### 3. Findings

**Table 2:** About Gender participation

| Respondents Category | Frequency | Percentage % |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Male                 | 50        | 62           |
| Female               | 30        | 37           |
| Total                | 100       | 80           |

#### Gender

In the table 2 indicates that 62% of the total respondents were male and 37% were female. This shows that majority of the respondents were male while female were the minorities which means men are the most leaders in NGOs, Youth Organizations and traditional leaders.

#### Article Question one

##### What is the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu Somalia?

The first objective of the Article which was to identify the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu, Somalia. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher asked a number of questions by the respondents to provide answers to research question one. The results are presented in the following table.

**Table 3.1:** Local leaders play an important role in the peaceful efforts in Mogadishu Somalia

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 55        | 68.75        |
| Agree             | 20        | 25           |
| Disagree          | 5         | 6.25         |
| Strongly Disagree | 0         | 0            |
| Total             | 80        | 100          |

In table 3.1 indicates the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu, Somalia. The percentage of respondents who strongly agree were 68.75%, 25% agree, 6.25% disagree and 0% strongly disagreed. Based on the results above the research agreed that the local leaders play an important role in the peaceful efforts in Mogadishu Somalia.

**Table 3.2:** Local leaders' contribute the peaceful efforts in Mogadishu, Somalia is diminishing.

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 60        | 75           |
| Agree             | 15        | 18.75        |
| Disagree          | 4         | 5            |
| Strongly Disagree | 1         | 1.25         |
| Total             | 80        | 100          |

In table 3.2 shows that the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu, Somalia. The percentage of the respondents who strongly agreed were 75%, 18.5 agreed, 5% disagree and 1.25% strongly disagreed. Based on the results above the research agreed that the local leaders contribute the peaceful effort in Mogadishu, Somalia.

**Table 3.3:** Local leaders in Mogadishu strengthen the community's capacity to deal with conflict

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 50        | 62.5         |
| Agree             | 20        | 25           |
| Disagree          | 5         | 6.25         |
| Strongly Disagree | 5         | 6.25         |
| Total             | 80        | 100          |

In table 3.5 in dictates the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu Somalia. The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed were 62.5%, 25% agreed, 6.25 disagreed and 6.25 strongly disagreed. Based on the results above the researcher strongly agreed that the local leader in Mogadishu strengthen the community's capacity to deal with conflict.

#### Article Question two

##### What are the strategies used by local leaders in the conflict resolution?

This question was derived from the second objective of the study which was to identify the strategies used by local leaders in the conflict resolution. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher asked a number of questions by the respondents to provide answers to research question two. The results are presented in the following tables.

**Table 4.1:** Local leaders in Mogadishu mediate and reconcile parties between the conflicts

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 60        | 75           |
| Agree             | 15        | 18.75        |
| Disagree          | 3         | 3.75         |
| Strongly Disagree | 2         | 2.5          |
| Total             | 80        | 100          |

In table 4.1 shows the strategies used by local leaders in conflict resolution in Mogadishu, Somalia. The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed were 75%, 18.75 agreed, 3.75 disagreed and 2.5 strongly disagreed. Based on the results above the researcher agreed that the local leaders in Mogadishu mediate and reconcile parties between the conflicts.

**Table 4.2:** Local leaders in Mogadishu use early warning to prevent conflict at local level

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 50        | 62.5         |
| Agree             | 25        | 31.25        |
| Disagree          | 4         | 5            |
| Strongly Disagree | 0         | 1.25         |
| Total             | 80        | 100          |

In table 4.2 shows the strategies used by local leader in conflict resolution in Mogadishu, Somalia. The percentage of the respondent who strongly agreed was 62.5%, 31.25% agreed, 5% disagreed and 1.25% strongly disagreed. Based on the result above the researcher agreed that the local leaders in modish use early warning to prevent conflict at local level.

**Question three**

**What are the challenges facing by local leaders in conflict resolution?**

This question was derived from the third objective of the study which was to investigate the challenges faced by local leaders in conflict resolution. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher asked a number of questions by the respondents to provide answers to research question three. The results are presented in the following table.

**Table 5.1:** Warlords are the main obstacle of peace building process and reconciliation in Mogadishu, Somalia

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 60        | 75           |
| Agree             | 15        | 18.75        |
| Disagree          | 5         | 6.25         |
| Strongly Disagree | 0         | 0            |
| Total             | 80        | 100          |

In table 5.1 shows the challenges facing by local leaders in conflict resolution. The percentage of the respondent who strongly agreed was 75%, 18.55% agreed, 6.25% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. Based on the result above the researcher agreed that Warlords are the main obstacle of peace building process and reconciliation in Somalia.

**Table 5.5:** Lack of effective government institutions also challenges of peace building process in Somalia

| Categories        | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 10        | 12.5         |
| Agree             | 45        | 56.25        |
| Disagree          | 20        | 25           |
| Strongly Disagree | 5         | 6.25         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>80</b> | <b>100</b>   |

In table 5.5 shows the challenges facing by local leaders in conflict resolution. The percentage of the respondent who strongly agreed was 12.5%, 56.25% agreed, 25% disagreed and 6.25% strongly disagreed.

Based on the result above the researcher agreed that the Lack of effective government institutions also challenges of peace building process in Somalia.

**4. Literature Review**

**The Somali Conflict**

Somalia is a semi-arid country located in the Horn of Africa, with a coastline of 3,025 kilometers, making it the longest coastline of any continental African country. It has no significant mineral resources, and though 45% of land can be used for grazing, only 13% is arable Most of the population are either pastoralists or farmers.

According to Independent Institute (Report, 2006) Somalia is considered a least developed country (LDC) according to the United Nations (UN), with 43.2% of the population living on less than one US dollar a day, and 73.4% living on two US dollars a daythe malnutrition rate in Somalia is at 19%, 4% above what is considered emergency level. Despite these indicators, a report published at the end of 2006 by the Independent Institute found that compared to forty-two sub-Saharan African countries, Somalia measured up fairly favorably, ranking in the top half in six areas out of thirteen assessed. Somalia ranked in the bottom half in infant mortality, immunization rates and access to improved water sources. Though life expectancy fell by two years from 1985 to 1990, it rose by five years between 1990 and 2005, and Somalia has moved from 29<sup>th</sup> to 80<sup>th</sup> in telecommunications.

There are about six million people currently living in Somalia, which is two million fewer than before the war. Over 500,000 are internally displaced persons (though numbers have recently risen even higher), and 400,000 are refugees elsewhere. The conflict in Somalia is a complex combination of regional conflicts and intrastate tensions, political crises and interstate relations, particularly between Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, who each harbor groups involved in fighting in the other countries.

Somalia has been without a functioning government since 1991 and is plagued by food and environmental insecurity; infighting and divisions between clans and between agro-pastoralists and pastoralists; as well as war profiteers. (Gettleman, Jeffrey, 2007).

**Traditional conflict resolution**

The Somali transitional institutions, including the legal system, are weak and the transitional authorities' ability to protect the population's rights is extremely limited.

According to Gundel,(2006) Law enforcement in Somalia is currently carried out in three different ways; traditional common law practiced through the councils of elders/clan leaders, Islamic law practiced through Sharia courts and secular law practiced through an ordinary court authority. However, the ordinary court authority was destroyed during the civil war, and is still almost non-existent in Southern Somalia. Traditional common law is the most widespread and most commonly used legal system in present day Somalia.

The long-term conflict, absence of law and order and rapid changes in the socio-economic conditions have further led to continuous pressure on the traditional leaders in their role as enforcers of law and order in and between clans (Gundel, 2006).

### Strategies for Peace in Somalia

According to CRD, 2004 A varieties of different peace-building strategies have been used local leaders in Somalia. Although there are probably many ways to categorize them, this article will try to use four categories based on the degree of centralization of the peace negotiations and the degree of affiliation with the local community, the latter meaning both grass root organizations and traditional clan leaders.

One category could be named the building block approach. This approach was promoted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) from 1997 and subsequently by the United Nations. This approach tried to find local solutions, involving traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and often traditional clan leaders.

A successful local election was held in December 2002 while a presidential election took place in April 2003. The elections, combined with the clan identity of the new president, were important because Somaliland now had democratic structures paralleling its clan-based structures, a mixture that functions extremely well.

Local leaders elected the former head of SSDF, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, as interim president. Yusuf was perceived by the Ethiopian government as being their champion against Islamic fundamentalism; he had survived a coup attempt by Islamic fundamentalists and subsequently became known as an ardent enemy of the latter. His election thus ensured Ethiopian support for the Puntland effort. However, Yusuf, who had previously shown a ruthless style of leadership when he headed the SSDF, conformed approximately to William Reno's definition of a warlord, turning his political authority into an effective means for controlling markets without relying on formal state institutions. This disregard for formal state institutions surfaced clearly in 2001 when Yusuf's interim period ended. Yusuf, whose term of office ended on 30 June 2001, claimed that his mandate had been extended by parliament.

### The challenges for peace in Somalia

According to Ibrahim abdioker, (2005) Despite the abundance of local peace processes in south central Somalia, they have not led to the establishment of more durable government structures of the type that have emerged in Puntland and Somaliland. Certainly traditional elders have played a critically important role in mediating and regulating the interactions within and between local communities. However a number of factors have made their task more difficult.

First the powerful clan-based faction leaders (the 'warlords') that have emerged from the conflict in south central Somalia have consistently challenged traditional elders' authority. During the prolonged period of chaos and lawlessness, such leaders, along with politicians and business people, recruited armed militia to further their own interests. They also promoted their own choice of elders, who lacked local legitimacy and undermined the existing system of leadership.

Before the collapse of the state, power in the rural communities was mediated through traditional chieftains and elders, supported by government security institutions. The effectiveness of customary law and codes of behavior was weakened by these 'merchants of war', who used tactics of divide-and-rule among the clan elders in pursuit of their own agendas.

The reliance of the international community on armed faction leaders as their primary interlocutors in Somalia and apparent representatives of clan constituencies has compounded the problem and further eroded the standing of traditional authorities. DahiyeUulow, a prominent elder in BeletWein, has stated that "the emergence of armed warlords and business people during the anarchy of the civil war period is the primary reason for the failure of attempts to settle local Somali conflicts".

A second difficulty has been that fragmentation and distrust within the main clan families, which has led smaller sub-clans to identify their own leaders. Traditionally clan elders were seen as responsible for ensuring the peaceful co-existence of the community as a whole and for working to resolve local conflicts. However the circumstances of the civil war led some elders to mobilize their own clan militia for inter- and intra-clan fighting and to side with their kin, even when they were the aggressors. In the Somali cultural context, the declaration of responsibility "I am an aggressor" by the relevant party is critical to the success of traditional conflict resolution. If the responsible party declines to confess to being the aggressor, the reconciliation initiative usually fails.

Another important feature of the civil war period in many areas of south central Somalia has been the breakdown of traditional customary law (*xeer*) between pastoral and agricultural communities. In rural communities disputes over access to shared grazing or water sources and agricultural land are common and can become violent. In most cases a *xeer* exists between co-habiting groups that governs social relations and access to communal resources. Before the collapse of the Somali state these kinds of conflicts were generally arbitrated successfully by elders using *xeer*. Any clan member (or clan) who challenged the arbitration faced sanctions (*Maraado-Ta'siir*) by the clans concerned.(Sahnoun, Mohamed 2009).

### 5. Conclusion

In generally the article was established the three main objectives which are:-

- 1) To identify the level of the contribution of Somali local leader in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu, Somali.
- 2) To identify the strategies used by local leaders in peace building process in Mogadishu, Somalia.
- 3) To investigate the challenges face local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building process in Mogadishu, Somalia.

After developed a lot of efforts to present the importance of the contribution of local leaders that take part to reconcile peace building and solving conflicts between the Somali

people, at the end of the analysis that concerns to know the contribution of local leaders in conflict resolution and peace building in Mogadishu- Somalia.

The Author obtained that the local leaders have high and strong contribution solve the conflicts and strengthen the peace building in Mogadishu-Somalia, while 93% of the Article respondents agreed that the most strategy that local leaders used was mediation and reconciliation strategy which is the most effective one.

On the other hand, in terms of the challenges faced by traditional elders, the author found out above 90% of the article participants believed that the most challenges that the local leaders faced was Warlords to achieve peace building and reconciliation process.

It is concluded that the local leaders are the eyes of the community to develop and solve their conflict issues and bring the peace building.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the article findings, following recommendations are made:

- Somali local leaders should establish peace building and reconciliation conferences including all parts involving the civil war and electoral controversy in the country.
- Local leaders in Mogadishu should strengthen the community's capacity to deal with conflict resolution.
- Local leaders must initiates programs that promote inter-community dialogue and address the culture of violence.
- In order to reduce the effects of the armed violence, local leaders need to increase their advocacy towards public mobilization for peace.

## 7. Acknowledgments

The Author needs to express his gratitude to Somali National University, specially, Training office for their office equipment support and encouragements.

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