

# BEYOND THE ACCORD:

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL PEACE STRUCTURES IN MANAGING INTER-CLAN CONFLICTS IN PUNTLAND STATE, SOMALIA

Abdirahman Said Bile



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MAKING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE WORK

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## DESIGN

Designed by Maggie Dougherty

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Clan conflicts in Somalia have a long history, dating back to the colonial era through to the period before the collapse of the government in 1991, up to the present day. For this reason, Somalis have developed rich experience in resolving interclan conflicts using traditional resolution mechanisms. This approach focuses on the containment of the conflict of the day rather than building and sustaining peace and/or preventing the re-escalation of conflicts. To prevent the recurrence of conflicts and keep peace, peacebuilding initiatives need to be influenced by a web of different actors, all the way from elite leadership to grassroots level. This study focuses on a Joint Peace Committee that was established in the Adadda area of the borders between Puntland, Somalia and Ethiopia to prevent the recurrence of a conflict and build the broken relationship between two disputing clans. The study employed a qualitative approach to collect and analyse data. Twelve Key Informant Interviews were conducted, and two Focus Group Discussions held (consisting of eight respondents each), in addition to the review of secondary literature on peacebuilding. The effectiveness of a local peace committee depends on its success to resolve the factors that have been hindering peace by addressing the structural causes of conflict and implementing any agreement reached, as well as by issuing early warning of escalation and activating early response, raising public awareness on peace, and building the relationship between the feuding communities. These factors prevent the recurrence of conflicts and help with the promotion of peace. To reach long-lasting solutions to interclan conflicts in Somalia, the study recommends the establishment of peace committees in conflict-prone zones, composed of diverse members of society from different levels of the community.

# INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, there has been a global increase in the recurrence of intra-state conflicts. A full 80 to 90 per cent of intra-state conflicts have at some point resumed to affect the more than 1.5 billion people living in conflict zones in about 90 countries worldwide, according to the 2011 World Development Report (WDR).<sup>1</sup> A decade later, in 2021, there were active conflicts in at least 46 countries, with more than 150,000 casualties, up 13 per cent from even the year before in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

The WDR called for national efforts to build institutional infrastructures for peace. Infrastructure for peace is defined as ‘dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills, which through dialogue and consultation contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a society’.<sup>3</sup> Local Peace Committees (LPCs) are cornerstones for peace and important elements of infrastructure for peace.<sup>4</sup> They can be formal, institutionalized by the national government, or informally established by the local community.

Local peace committee is ‘a generic name for committees or other structures formed at the level of a district, municipality, town, or village with the aim to encourage and facilitate joint, inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding processes within its own context’.<sup>5</sup> This definition encompasses a Joint Peace Committee (JPC) and all types of mediation, and delegations that have the same functions for promoting peace and reconciliation. Other definitions include a ‘conflict intervention structure that integrates both traditional and modern conflict intervention mechanisms to prevent, manage or transform intro-ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts’.<sup>6</sup>

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- 1 World Bank, *World Bank Development Report: Conflict, security and development*, Washington D.C: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2011.
  - 2 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook: Armement, Disarmament and Security*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.
  - 3 Jordan Ryan, ‘Infrastructure for peace as a path to resilient societies: An institutional perspective’, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7/3 (2013):15.
  - 4 Paul Van Tongeren, ‘Potential cornerstones of infrastructure for peace? How local peace committees can make a difference’, *Peacebuilding* 1/1 (2012): 39-60.
  - 5 Andries Odendaal and Retief Olivier, ‘Local peace committees: Some reflections and lessons learned’, Report Funded by USAID for the Nepal Transition to Peace Initiative (NTTP), Academy for Educational Development (AED), Kathmandu, 2008. Accessed 23 November 2023, <https://www.peaceinfrastructures.org/documents/local-peace-committees-some-reflections-and-lessons-learned>, 3.
  - 6 Mohamud Adan and Ruto Pkalya, *A Snapshot Analysis of the Concept Peace Committee in Relation to Peacebuilding Initiatives in Kenya*, Nairobi: Practical Action, 2006.

The problem with this definition is that it emphasizes the ambivalent nature of modern and traditional conflict intervention mechanisms. Whereas most LPCs are, in the case of Somalia, rooted exclusively in Somali customary law.

The LPC strategy is characterised by ‘its emphasis on dialogue, mutual understanding, trust-building, constructive and inclusive solutions to conflict, and joint action that includes all sides of the conflict and is aimed at reconciliation’.<sup>7</sup> The concept of local peace committees is founded on the premise that local communities, affected by violent conflict, have the capacity to promote peace and resolve conflicts because they have greater motivation to solve them than external actors do.<sup>8</sup> The concept is rooted in the ‘local turn’ approach to peacebuilding, a debate that emerged from the critique of liberal peacebuilding and other top-down approaches that neglected local contexts in peacebuilding initiatives.<sup>9</sup>

The idea of the local turn was developed further when the United Nations called for strengthening the capacity of local communities in order to be more able to resolve conflicts. Since then, international actors have emphasised the role that local governance and governments can play in peacebuilding processes to improve local ownership of the process.

Local peace structures have been an effective method of managing conflicts in Africa, which remains the continent most affected by conflicts. For example, in Kenya, the Wajir Peace Committee was formed in 1995 after clan clashes wreaked havoc in the district. The committee’s success compelled the Kenyan government to replicate it in other parts of the country. Hence, after the 2007/2008 post election violence (PEV), LPCs were institutionalized elsewhere in Kenya. LPCs have also been established in Ghana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Africa to resolve conflicts, while also promoting community empowerment and rural development at grassroot levels.<sup>10</sup>

In Somalia, since the fall of the Siyad Barre regime in 1991, and the disintegration of the state that followed, armed conflicts between rival clans have claimed thousands of lives. No single factor can be solely attributed to causing them, but colonial legacy, clan rivalry, land disputes and the oppressive practices of the former military regime all contributed. During the civil war, major clans fought over the control of major towns and important agricultural and pastoral areas. Though the conflict between these major clans led to the death of thousands of their people, the displacement of many others among them into neighbouring countries, and the large-scale destruction of property, it was minority clans that suffered the most. These clan

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7 Odendaal and Olivier, ‘Local peace committees,’ 9-10.

8 Fritz Ngange, ‘Local peace committees and grassroot peacebuilding in Africa,’ in *The state of peacebuilding in Africa*, eds. Terene McNamee and Monde Muyangwa, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

9 Mathijs Van Leeuwen et al., ‘The local turn and notions of conflict and peacebuilding: Reflections on local peace committees in Burundi and Congo,’ *Journal of Peacebuilding* 8/3 (2020): 279-299.

10 Paul van Tongeren, ‘Potential cornerstone of infrastructure for peace?’ How local peace committees can make a difference’, *Peacebuilding* 1/1 (2013): 39-60.

conflicts involved not only powerful clans fighting against each other, but also sub-clans within those powerful clans turning against each other.

Somali society has many institutions and mechanisms for managing conflicts. The traditional reconciliation mechanism to settle disputes between conflicting parties is based on *Sharia* jurisprudence and customary law. Traditional elders, who are involved in various peace committees, are the most important practitioners of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The overall goal of the process is to bring together the feuding clans and reach an agreement over disputes. However, practical experience has shown that conflict is more likely to recur if the agreement signed is not reinforced by efforts in building and sustaining the peace.<sup>11</sup> This applies to the example of the Adadda conflict, which has recurred more than seven times despite each outbreak of violence being followed by a traditional peace settlement.

According to a recent study by the Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC), since 2005, 11 clan conflicts have occurred in Puntland, accounting for around 64 per cent of all conflicts during the study period.<sup>12</sup> This recurrence is due to factors such as lack of enforcement and follow-up on agreements, and failure to address underlying causes of the conflict.

Somali reconciliation processes have been the subject of numerous studies,<sup>13</sup> but their focus has mainly been the substance, process, approach, and actors of traditional reconciliation processes. There is little research done on how peace should be kept and sustained. Thus, the establishment of the Adadda Joint Peace Committee, and its success, stands out as a unique case that deserves to be studied independently, so as to critically examine its success, failures and the lessons learnt from it so far. The Adadda Joint Peace Committee is the first local peace structure to have been formed in a post-conflict setting that involved two clans within Puntland State.

This study contributes to general debates on local peace committees, particularly those in situations where there is no national government supporting them, as in the case in Somalia. In

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- 11 Dekha Ibrahim Abdi and Simon J.A Mason, *Mediation and Governance in Fragile contexts: Small steps to peace*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2019.
  - 12 Puntland Development and Research Center, 'Puntland based community conflicts: Prioritizing prevention over reconciliation', Background Paper, Puntland Development Research Center, 2022. Accessed 13 October 2023, <http://ussfs.org/sfs/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/DRAFT-BACKGROUND-PAPER-ON-PUNTLAND-HDR-SEPTEMBER-2011.pdf>.
  - 13 Mark Bradbury and Sally Healy, 'Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacemaking', Accord Issue 21, Conciliation Resources, February 2010. Accessed 13 October 2023, <https://www.c-r.org/so/learning-hub/whose-peace-is-it-anyway-connecting-somali-and-international-peacemaking-somali>; Pat Johson, 'The search for peace: A Synthesis report for peace mapping study', Synthesis Report, Interpeace, 2009. Accessed 13 October 2023, [https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/2009\\_Som\\_Interpeace-APD-CRD-PDRC-A\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_Of\\_The\\_Peace\\_Mapping\\_Study\\_EN.pdf](https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/2009_Som_Interpeace-APD-CRD-PDRC-A_Synthesis_Report_Of_The_Peace_Mapping_Study_EN.pdf); Puntland Development and Research Center and Interpeace, 'The Puntland experience: A bottom up approach to peace and statebuilding', Report, Puntland Development Research Center, 2008. Accessed 13 October 2023, <https://pdrcsomalia.org/Publications/the-search-for-peace-the-puntland-experience-a-bottom-up-approach-to-peace-and-state-building/>.



this regard, the study sought to examine the extent to which the Adadda committee has been effective in preventing clan conflicts from resuming in its area of influence.

This study is useful for the Government of Puntland, which has been reeling from the impact of increased clan conflict. The study's findings are also valuable to local research institutions, such as the PDRC, which has been working towards uncovering the best ways to make peace. The findings are also useful to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), which often play the role of the government during peacemaking processes between neighbouring clans.

This introduction is followed by the study methodology, after which an overview of the Somali reconciliation processes is discussed. The next section focuses on the Addada Joint Peace Committee, beginning with its history, before turning to the committee's effectiveness in peacebuilding among feuding communities and factors in its success. The last section provides the conclusion and recommendations for policy.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## DATA COLLECTION

The study adopted a qualitative case study approach towards understanding and examining the role played by the Adadda JPC. It sought to gain greater insight, and to bring the work and experiences of this local peace committee in Puntland State into context by taking detailed account of its structures, roles and mandate, as well as the challenges it faced and the things it achieved.

Data for this study was drawn from a wide range of resources: A desk study was conducted to review secondary data on local peace committees, particularly the Adadda peace structures. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with sufficient information and experience in local conflict resolution and particularly membership in local peace committees. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 12 selected participants (six from the joint peace committee), four mediation experts (who had participated in at least three mediation committees), and two interviewees from the civil society organisations involved in peacebuilding processes, including those of Adadda, over the past ten years. In addition, two focus group discussions were conducted, whereby each FGD had eight participants composed of a mix of men, women and youth. The data was collected in February 2023.

A total of 28 participants took part in the study. There were 17 (61 per cent) male respondents and 11 (39 per cent) female participants. This gender distribution reflected that of the composition of the Adadda JPC, in which 18 members were male and six female, signifying also the notion that conflict and peace are men's domains in the Somali context. The majority were older people, with 79 per cent aged above 40. About 70 per cent of the respondents had more than five years experience in peacebuilding.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

**TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS			
		Frequency	Percentage
<b>GENDER</b>	Male	17	39
	Female	11	61
<b>AGE</b>	20-30	1	4
	31-40	5	17
	41-50	10	36
	50 & above	12	43
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	1-5 years	8	28
	6-10 years	4	14
	>10 years	12	43
	None	4	15

**THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is based on the theory of conflict transformation developed by John Paul Lederach in early 1990s. Although its conceptual foundations can be found in diverse scholarly works, such as Galtung’s theory on violence and peacebuilding, the framework was first presented by Lederach in his book *Building peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997).

Building peace in today’s societies calls for long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across levels of society; an infrastructure that empowers the resources for reconciliation from within society and maximizes contributions from outside.<sup>14</sup>

Lederach introduced the ‘peacebuilding pyramids’, a framework that has identified different levels and actors in the process of peacebuilding. The three actors are: 1) Track I, elite leadership that includes high-level political actors, such as government and non-state opposition leaders; 2) Track II, middle level leaders, academics, public intellectuals, and leaders of major non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and 3) Track III, grassroot leadership, including community leaders and local NGO leaders. Combining and linking all these levels can transform conflict into sustainable peace.<sup>15</sup>

Lederach acknowledges the roles played by grassroot institutions and by top leaders in conflict resolution, but still he argues a gap exists between the two; local level actors can help solve

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14 Cited in Balázs Áron Kovács, *Peace infrastructure and statebuilding at the margin*, Cham: Springer, 2019, 117.  
 15 John Paul Lederach, *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*, Washington: United States Institute for Peace Press, 1997.

conflicts, he maintains, but they cannot influence the top-level leadership, which plays a key role. In practice, we see that the process of reconciliation cannot be divorced from national or regional politics, and that factors heavily influenced by these can lie beyond the control of local authorities.<sup>16</sup> The same is true of the top level, which cannot solve conflicts at the local level on its own. Thus, the need of this linking level that is the ‘middle out’ approach, whose work is to make sure the efforts of the other two actors trickle up and down. Its proponents maintain that the middle out level is ‘neither bound by the political considerations of high-level leaders nor the everyday hardship’ of those at the grassroots.<sup>17</sup>

According to this theory of Lederach, the middle level is the most important element in transforming conflicts. Critics, however, argue that the original theory overemphasizes the middle level without giving other actors the credit they deserve for sometimes proving more effective than the middle level in building peace.<sup>18</sup> Thania Paffenholz sees the role of the middle level as misinterpreted by practitioners in operationalizing the theory originally intended by Lederach. This is seen as a failure ‘to recognize context sensitivity and local ownership by making narrow and flexible interpretations that grant civil society operating on the middle level an unquestioned degree of status.’<sup>19</sup>

Dekha Ibrahim and Simon Mason<sup>20</sup> have developed a framework, roughly shaped by Lederach’s three-track approach but based particularly in fragile contexts. The Small, Medium and Long-term Linkages (SMALL) framework maintains that conflicts can be resolved by following a different sort of three tracks. The short-term track emphasises the mediation process of the conflict, the long-term focuses on governance and state-building, and the medium-term links the two levels. The most common model of the medium-term is the creation of local peace committees, which keep and sustain peace after a peace agreement.<sup>21</sup> This framework is more suitable for this study because the Adadda committee was formed as a middle-level link to keep, build and sustain peace after the (short-term) mediation process of the Meyggagle conference<sup>22</sup>. Its role was to rebuild destroyed relationships, focusing on reconciliation within society—a key role in the middle level approach of Lederach’s theory of conflict transformation.<sup>23</sup>

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16 Puntland Development and Research Center and Interpeace, ‘The Puntland experience’.

17 Kovács, *Peace infrastructure and statebuilding*.

18 Thania Paffenholz, ‘International peacebuilding goes local: Analyzing Lederach conflict transformation theory and its ambivalent encounter with 20 years of power,’ *Peacebuilding* 2/1 (2013): 11-27.

19 Paffenholz, ‘International peacebuilding goes local’.

20 Puntland Development and Research Center and Interpeace, ‘The Puntland experience’.

21 Dekha and Mason, *Mediation and governance in fragile contexts*.

22 Meyggagle reconciliation was the conference in which Adadda JPC was formed in 2017. After several attempts failed, the two prominent traditional elders of the clans agreed to organize Meyggagle reconciliation.

23 Paffenholz, ‘International peacebuilding goes local’.

# AN OVERVIEW OF SOMALI TRADITIONAL RECONCILIATION MECHANISMS

Conflict resolution mechanisms are among the most dominant and widely practised parts of the traditional system of governance used in Somalia. This has strong roots in *sharia* jurisprudence and customary law and is commonly applied by/with both formal and informal institutions for settling conflicts between disputants at individual and communal levels.

The most common practitioners of local conflict resolution mechanisms are traditional elders, organized in different committees, each identifying itself with a particular side involved in the peace process. These play the role of a broker or mediator interchangeably, depending on its designated role and the status of its participation at that point in time. Peace committees can be created in one of three forms: government-appointed, clan-appointed or voluntary.

Peace and reconciliation processes are organized by warring sub-clans or by a third party, each represented by a sizeable committee of selected clan elders. The latter committee is often composed of neutral, voluntary and self-organized elders from a neighbourly or brotherly sub-clan and is known as a peace mediation committee. The committees representing the two feuding sub-clans in the peace talks are known as peace delegates (delegations). In addition, there are joint peace committees, which are supposed to implement and sustain the peace, although they are a relatively recent creation, adopted only in 2017.

The first stage of a peace process is to initiate a meeting, with the traditional elders of both disputing parties, to try to manage the de-escalation of the conflict. A ceasefire and the disengagement of forces follows the creation of a favourable environment for mediations to start. If the elders of the two disputing parties cannot reach an agreement, the traditional elders of the neighbouring warring clans offer to mediate. A reputable peace committee is selected (from outside the clans) and then the warring clans are invited to nominate the delegates who will represent them. The goal of the reconciliation process is to reach an agreement to bring the situation back to normal. The committee hears the verdict, after which it announces its conclusion.

There are several factors that facilitate the success of the peace committees, such as the mandate of the committees, the strategies they adopt, their composition and their legitimacy. The mandate of LPCs varies from one LPC to another, depending on the intensity, severity and

the sort of the conflict they are assigned to solve. In some cases, LPCs are mandated to promote peace, which can be a vague term and may lead the committee to undertake tasks outside their purview. The mandate most LPCs are given is to keep the violence down, solve community problems, and empower local actors to become peacemakers.<sup>24</sup>

The composition of the LPCs is an important factor in their success. It includes the mediator's identity and characteristics, and the degree of inclusiveness involved.

LPCs are inclusive committees, operating at sub-national levels and containing different segments of the community, and they have a role to promote peace, keeping context in mind.<sup>25</sup> They include elders, religious leaders, members of civil society, politicians, military officers and members of the diaspora. The culture of the people and context of the conflict is important as 'an effective mediation process requires the precise analysis and understanding of both conflict and peace dynamics'.<sup>26</sup>

The characteristics of the mediator, such as neutrality and prestige, are important. According to Dekha and Mason, peace practitioners need to have the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a mediator, as well as the in-depth knowledge of the context they are working in and as strong network of relationships.<sup>27</sup>

Lastly, the legitimacy of the LPCs is a major factor in the success of the peace initiative.<sup>28</sup> Lack of legitimacy is one of the major factors that undermines adherence to their decisions. It is made worse when a local administration does not collaborate with the LPCs. In the Somali context, where people are organised into clans and there is no effective government to manage peace processes, the question of the legitimacy of committees is even harder. In order for the LPCs to gain legitimacy from the feuding clans, the clans should consent to abide by the rulings of the mediating committee. Sometimes they are sworn in before mediation proceeds.

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24 Tongeren, 'Potential cornerstones of infrastructure for peace?'

25 Andries Odendaal, 'The political legitimacy of national peace committees', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7/3 (2013): 40-53.

26 Nisar Majid and Marika Theoros, 'Galkaio, Somalia: Bringing the border', *Peacebuilding* 10/2 (2022): 174.

27 Dekha and Mason, *Mediation and Governance in Fragile contexts*.

28 Odendaal, 'The political legitimacy of national peace committees'.

# THE ADADDA JOINT PEACE COMMITTEE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Adadda area is situated between Somalia and Ethiopia's Zone 5, specifically between the regions of Sool and Nugaal, which form a triangular intersect with the border with Ethiopia. Its residents are a mainly pastoralist community, and it is a known area of conflict, generally inhabited by nomadic livestock herders of the Harti sub-clan from the Daarood clan family, that is the Baharasame of the Dhulbahante clan and the Omar Mohamoud of the Majeerteen sub-clans, which have been feuding in this rich pastoral enclave for decades.

Communal conflicts have occurred in Adadda, Qorile, Meygaagle, Maga'ley, Gumburka and Arriska villages since 1985.<sup>29</sup> The deadliest and most devastating, however, took place in 2017, when more than 70 people lost their lives (mostly members of feuding militias). The inhabitants of several villages were displaced, property destroyed and livestock looted.

The Adadda Joint Peace Committee consists of 24 members. It was established during the last peace and reconciliation conference that took place in Meygaagle village in February 2018, and which saw the signing of the longest-living peace agreement to date between the Omar Mohamoud and Baharasame. The conference marked the first unmediated peacemaking process and the introduction of the local joint peace committee. The JPC was first established with 18 elders selected from the two delegations attending the conference. It was later expanded to include six women, three from each side. The members of this committee are constituent members of the two communities in the area affected by conflict, and each was selected based on his or her prominence, integrity and willingness to build peace within the community.

The JPCs are distinct from the committees used traditionally in ways such as composition and function. A JPC consists of people drawn from different sections of the population, including women and youth, whereas delegates for mediation committees are exclusively men.<sup>30</sup> The joint peace committee performs roles specifically relating to the post-agreement consolidation of peace, the implementation of a peace agreement and the prevention of any potential flare-up and escalation of the conflict. JPCs stay with the community for a long time to heal the

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29 Puntland Development and Research Center and Interpeace, 'The Puntland experience'.

30 Aden and Pkalya, *A Snapshot Analysis of the Concept Peace Committee*.

wounds of a conflict and bring together the clans. Mediation committees go home; they might sometimes communicate back but they only visit the area when something happens.

JPCs embody peace gestures, and their very establishment—plus the initial collaboration of peace activities held jointly by both sides—serves as an icebreaker, breaking the silence each clan fears and marking the first, unguarded physical contact between former enemies.



# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADADDA PEACE COMMITTEE IN MANAGING INTER-CLAN CONFLICTS IN PUNTLAND

Local peace committees facilitate community efforts to reestablish peace and reduce the risk of more violence. They can be formed at any stage of the conflict and tasked with the broader responsibilities of peacebuilding or with specific assignments, such as initiating peaceful mediation to end the conflict. Understanding the reasons for the formation of the committee and their mandate is vital for the realization of their objectives and for measuring their outcome. This study explored the reasons for the formation of the Adadda Joint Peace Committee: All its participants pointed out that lessons were learnt from previous peace initiatives, which had failed to keep the peace because of a lack of follow up and therefore a lack of implementation. There had been half a dozen failed attempts to resolve the conflict. Below are responses from two interviewees on the rationale for establishing the Adadda peace committee:

It became difficult to go beyond the compensation. There were no people to follow up the peace. Thus, we acknowledged that we have reached agreements many times and they failed to bring about peace.<sup>31</sup>

And:

So we are peacekeepers. Previously peace was not followed. It needs to be reared, as we do our livestock. You know we rear livestock to protect it from predators. Peace is the same, if not followed, spoilers will take advantage.<sup>32</sup>

Mediation efforts reached by using traditional conflict mechanisms secured agreement between warring factions but signing an agreement did not necessarily guarantee the conflict would not recur; rather a combination of political, security and civil actions were needed to build and sustain the peace.<sup>33</sup> Anthony Wanniss-St John seems to agree with this argument, noting how ‘building peace after violent conflict has begun to subside is just as much a process as the

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31 Interview with Adadda local committee, Qoriley, 11 February 2023.

32 Interview with Adadda peace committee member, Qoriley, 11 February 2023.

33 Kovács, *Peace infrastructure and statebuilding*; Dekha and Mason, *Mediation and Governance in Fragile contexts*.

negotiation of that peace’.<sup>34</sup>

The shortcomings of most Somali-led reconciliation conferences relate to their emphasis on mediation, leaving out the most important components of peacebuilding, such as the implementation of the agreement, which is vital for the peace initiative to succeed. People assume that conflicts end once an accord is signed, forgetting the conflict is between two neighbouring clans that start to fight again once delegates go home, precisely because there are no longer delegates staying with warring communities distanced by the the conflict.<sup>35</sup>

Generally, the role of local peace committees depends on the tasks assigned during the time they were established and the purpose for which they were formed. Findings from the study show that the specific roles of the Adadda JPC were not defined during the Meygaagle conference. Rather, elders assigned them a broader task that fell under the purview of ‘keeping peace in cooperating [with] whatever administration they see necessary’.<sup>36</sup> This, according to a 38-year-old participant, entailed all the tasks that constitute broader stabilization, such as preventing the recurrence of conflict, enhancing trust between the disputed sides, and facilitating communication:

The JPC is primarily tasked with the promotion and maintenance of peace at community level, [the] prevention of further flare-up and escalation of conflicts, [the] restoration of confidence and normalcy in the affected areas, and [the] facilitation of cross communal exchanges and [the] free movement of people and animals.<sup>37</sup>

We can infer from the above that the roles the Adadda peace structures assume are restoring confidence in the community and acting as an early warning mechanism; facilitating communication and raising public awareness; and following up on the implementation of agreements. These findings support studies carried out on LPCs around the world and outlined by scholars, such as Andries Odendaal, who lists the functions of LPCs as: facilitating communication; the prevention of violence; facilitating local peacemaking; the mediation of conflict; strengthening social cohesion; and following up on information.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, Mohamud Aden and Ruto Pkalya state the key functions of peace committees as being the promotion of peaceful coexistence through peacebuilding, dialogue and the arbitration

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34 Anthony Wannis-St John, ‘Indigenous peacebuilding’, in *The Routledge handbook of peacebuilding*, ed. Roger McGinty, London: Routledge, 2013.

35 Female FGD participant, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

36 Interview with the chairman of Adadda Peace committee, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

37 Interview with the chairman of Adadda Peace committee, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

38 Andries Odendaal, ‘An architecture for building peace at the local level: A comparative study of local peace committees’, Discussion Paper, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2010. Accessed 14 October 2023, [https://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/UNDP\\_Local%20Peace%20Committees\\_2011.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/UNDP_Local%20Peace%20Committees_2011.pdf)

of cases of conflict; the facilitation of peace dialogue and reconciliation forums by tracing, retrieving, and returning stolen livestock; raising conflict awareness; and the coordination of peace initiatives.<sup>39</sup> The next section will delineate how each task is performed by the Adadda joint peace committee.

According to Odendaal, the effectiveness of local peace committees can be assessed at two levels.<sup>40</sup> The first is whether LPCs are good for the communities caught in violent conflict. The second is whether LPCs contribute to national peace. Participants were asked the extent to which the Adadda Joint Peace committee solved inter-clan conflict in the area. Twenty-two participants answered 95 per cent of the conflict was resolved; three participants thought 85 per cent of the problem was solved; two participants said 80 per cent; and one thought 90 per cent was solved.

This shows the majority of participants believe that more than 90 per cent of the conflict was resolved. To assess fully its contribution, the study found that the Adadda JPC had contributed to reconciliation efforts beyond its geographical area. For example, during the Saaxmaygaag-Sangejabiye conflict in 2021, the JPC became the mediation committee, and later it was invited by the traditional elders there to share its experience with feuding clans.

The factors that Odendaal mentions can be adopted in situations where there is a local peace committee. As such, to assess the case of Adadda, the study further considered the extent to which factors that had caused previous peace initiatives to fail were now addressed. These include implementing the agreement, the prevention of further escalation and addressing the underlying causes of the conflict, which traditional approaches had previously failed to address.<sup>41</sup>

The study discovered that violent conflict had not recurred since 2017. According to participants, many factors have contributed to this, such as the building of trust between the two communities, the early warning mechanism that was put in place, regular information sharing and public awareness campaigns conducted routinely by the committee. Progress was made on the implementation of the agreement whereby two-thirds of the blood compensation demanded was paid.

In order to comprehend the effectiveness of the committee, the study explored each factor in detail.

## **FOLLOW UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT**

Findings from interviews established that the Meygaagle peace conference in which the Adadda

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39 Aden and Pkalya, *A Snapshot Analysis of the Concept Peace Committee*.

40 Odendaal, 'The political legitimacy of national peace committees'.

41 Puntland Development and Research Center and Interpeace, 'The Puntland experience'.

Joint Peace Committee was set up in 2018 contained provisions designed to prevent the conflict from escalating further. These included: 1) if someone kills another person, he/she will be arrested and handed over to the other clan, and the incident shall be viewed as personal and not as a clan act; and, 2) if someone attempts to commit a murder, he will be detained for ten years and his gun will be handed over to the clan of the intended victim. If his action causes injury, he will be detained for five years and the gun he used will be handed over to the other clan. The committee had succeeded in implementing these provisions, facilitating, according to one respondent, the exchange of eight guns used in attempted murders. When hearing complaints from people about missing property, committee members followed up by looking for the property.<sup>42</sup>

The findings concur with Galymzhan Kirbassov<sup>43</sup> and Dekha and Mason<sup>44</sup>, who point out that when an agreement is signed between parties in dispute, the most important factor that determines the success of the local peace process is the enforcement of the agreement. These further efforts are needed to avoid the conflict recurring. In most cases, enforcement of agreements is shaped by two things: Public enforcement that is seen as legitimate, and public buy-in, made by the communities implementing the accord. If there is no legitimate authority to enforce the agreement, its success depends solely on public goodwill and commitment.

In Somalia, where in many areas effective government has been largely absent since 1991, the failure to follow up after the signing of a peace accord is one of the factors that always undermines peace processes. Traditional reconciliation mechanisms assume peace is achieved once agreement is reached, when in fact sometimes clashes continue even while clan elders agree to the cessation of hostilities. Elite agreements are not necessarily significant in creating sustainable peace.<sup>45</sup>

While implementing the agreement, the Adaada JPC faced political, logistical and technical challenges. The involvement of different political actors in the peace process complicated the situation; the Adadda conflict zone is situated at the intersect of three administrations—Puntland, Somaliland and Zone 5 (the Somali-dominated state of Ethiopia)—each with its own interest in the resolution of the conflict. During the Meygaagle conference, the accord the two clans signed stipulated how future incidents of conflict should be dealt with; they agreed to arrest anyone who breached the agreement, with offenders from the Omar Mohamoud to be held in Garowe district and those from the Baharasame in Laascanood district of Sool region. Mistrust has arisen, however, due to the different political interests of the two administrations of Puntland and Somaliland.<sup>46</sup>

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42 Interview with Mohamed Warsame, the deputy chairman of Adadda Committee, Qoriley, 11 February 2023.

43 Kirbassov ‘Determinants of success’

44 Dekha and Mason, *Mediation and Governance in Fragile contexts*.

45 Kovács, ‘Peace infrastructure’.

46 All interviewed JPC reported this point.

These findings support previous studies. According to Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka,<sup>47</sup> LPCs face many challenges, such as the ambivalence of government bodies towards their role and their problem of dependence on the political will of top-level leaders. Their structures are vulnerable to manipulation by elite politicians, which discourages active members of the community from contributing.<sup>48</sup>

Logistically, too, the Adaada JPC faces challenges, in this case with transport. It meets regularly to discuss, and to solve, emerging challenges, and to raise public awareness on peace initiatives. But the fact that members of the JPC are scattered across six remote villages complicates their operations. Lack of public transport between the villages leads important meetings to be postponed. The PDRC, the research centre based in Garowe, the capital of Puntland state, has been supporting the Adaada JPC, but, still this challenge exists, as one respondent noted:

The committee [members] are nomadic people who are poor, they do not own cars. When they want to meet, it is difficult to gather, because villages are quite distant. I think the biggest challenge is to get a car to take the committees to the meetings.<sup>49</sup>

All of the study's participants said delays in compensation payments (the *Diya*) might hinder the peace process. This has led to the failure of many local clan reconciliations in the past:

The *Diya* payment is often given to the clan, which then distributes it in accordance with a formula set by the clan elders, and it is possible that relatives of the deceased receive less than one quarter of the compensation.<sup>50</sup>

In some cases, the family of the deceased do not receive *Diya*.<sup>51</sup> In others, where the compensation is more substantial and clans cannot afford to pay it, clans add up the number of people killed from each clan, and the clan that has inflicted more deaths pays the difference. Though this mechanism is important, it invites victims to look for justice outside the system, causing the return of conflict. During the Meygaagle conflict, agreement was reached to complete the payment in three phases. Though two phases were completed, the payment process fell behind schedule due to factors beyond the control of both clans. These included prolonged drought, which severely affected nomadic communities, and other hostilities that both clans were embroiled in, forcing both sides to reschedule the *Diya*.

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47 Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka, 'Giving peace an address? Reflections on the potential and challenges of creating peace infrastructures,' in *Peace infrastructures- Assessing concept and practice*, eds. Barbara Unger, Stina Lundstrom, Katrin Planta and Beatrix Austin, Berchtesgaden: Berghoff foundation, 2013.

48 Hopp-Nishanka, 'Giving peace an address?'

49 Interview with a member of the joint peace committee, Qoriley, 11 February 2023.

50 Interview with mediation expert Dahir Sanweylood, Garowe, 13 February 2023.

51 Interview with mediation expert Dahir Sanweylood, Garowe, 13 February 2023.

The issue of *Diya* remains one of the major causes of the recurrence of conflict:

Let me take this opportunity [to say] the conflict recurs because the compensation is taken by the clan and not given to the victims, [and] when children grow up and realize the blood compensation of their father was not given to them, they start to revenge.<sup>52</sup>

This is complicated by parallel committees established to collect compensation. In this sense, while compensation is a major challenge for the Adaada peace process, it does not question the competence of the Adadda JPC. Instead, compensation payments were a function given to another local peace committee, composed mainly of traditional elders. Several participants showed their concern about the issue.

## EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE

Odendaal<sup>53</sup> maintains that local peace committees can be of two categories: an early warning committee, established to prevent the escalation of a conflict, or a committee focused on social cohesion, designed to build and consolidate social relationships in the community. Early warning is defined as ‘a process that alerts decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and resurgence of violent conflict, and promotes understanding among decision makers of the nature and impact of violent conflict.’<sup>54</sup>

The cost of preventing conflict before it escalates is much lower than the cost of the consequences once conflict erupts. For that reason, the World Bank report, *Pathways for peace: inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict*, called on the world to prioritise ‘activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrency of conflicts’.<sup>55</sup>

Outbreaks of violence are often slow to escalate and may evolve over a period, even decades.<sup>56</sup> Revenge killings may start as a minor issue between two individuals or two groups but escalate into full conflict between clans.<sup>57</sup> Hence, having a well-designed early warning system gives decision makers or stakeholders the chance to reverse the prospect of bloodshed.

An effective early warning mechanism involves collection, analysis and the dissemination of

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52 Interview with former member of the reconciliation committee of Adadda since 2007, Garowe, 10 February 2023.

53 Odendaal, ‘The political legitimacy of national peace committees’.

54 Catherine Defontaine, ‘Setting up early warning and response systems to prevent violent conflict and save lives’, Blog, World Bank, 8 February 2019. Accessed 30 October 2023, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/setting-early-warning-and-response-systems-prevent-violent-conflicts-and-save-lives>.

55 United Nations and World Bank, ‘Pathways for peace: Inclusive approaches preventing violent conflict’, Washington DC: World Bank Group, 2017. Accessed 30 November 2023, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>.

56 United Nations and World Bank, ‘Pathway for peace’.

57 Puntland Development and Research Center, ‘Puntland based community conflicts.’

information, with recommendations made to targeted stakeholders. As Madhawa Palihapitiya puts it, ‘most community-based violence can be prevented if the right information is delivered to the right stakeholders to take the right action.’<sup>58</sup> In other words, effective early warning depends on linking the warning to the response.<sup>59</sup>

The Adadda Joint Peace Committee acts as both as an early warning and a social cohesion committee. As an early warning committee, it focuses on preventing the conflict from recurring and escalating by issuing warnings once a suspicious situation emerges. If one committee member sees or hears that a perpetrator is planning an attack or even buying bullets, he should at least inform the other side.<sup>60</sup>

The function of early warning mechanisms is not confined to the committee but shared with community members, who play an important role by sharing news of everything that could undermine peace with the committee. A community member sees someone collecting more ammunition, for example, and instantly informs a member of the joint peace committee. These findings are in line with Brigitte Rohwerder, who assessed the work of local peace committees designed to increase early response to conflict and prevent escalation, and found they were an effective means of preventing their escalation and recurrence.<sup>61</sup>

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

Peace education, to raise the awareness of the community to live peacefully, is an important component of well-functioning LPCs. It is:

The process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, intergroup, national or international level.<sup>62</sup>

The Joint Peace Committee conducts awareness-raising activities aimed at teaching the community the importance of peace. These awareness raising campaigns are undertaken during

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58 Madhawa Palihapitiya, ‘Early warning, early response’: Lessons from Sri-Lanka’, Blog, Alliance for Peacbuilding, 2024. Accessed 16 February 2024, <https://buildingpeaceforum.com/2013/09/early-warning-early-response-lessons-from-sri-lanka/>.

59 Godfrey Musila, ‘Early warning and the role of technology in Kenya,’ Report, International Peace Institute, 2013. Accessed 30 November 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrepo96257.pdf>.

60 Interview with a member of Joint peace committee, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

61 Brigitte Rohwerder, ‘Conflict early warning and early response’, Research Report, Government, Social Development, Humanitarian, Conflict (GSDRC), 2015. Accessed 16 February 2023, [https://www.academia.edu/11548635/Conflict\\_early\\_warning\\_and\\_early\\_response](https://www.academia.edu/11548635/Conflict_early_warning_and_early_response).

62 Susan Fountain, ‘Peace education in UNICEF’, Working paper, UNICEF, June 1999. Accessed 23 February 2024, [https://inec.org/sites/default/files/resources/UNICEF\\_Peace\\_Education\\_1999\\_en\\_o.pdf](https://inec.org/sites/default/files/resources/UNICEF_Peace_Education_1999_en_o.pdf).

the rainy season and the dry season. During the rainy season, if one community receives rain while other does not, drought may compell the second to migrate to the former's territory, creating tension over the limited amount of pasture available. This was the main trigger of the 2017 violence in Adadda when one clan (Baharasame) received rain while the other (Omar Mohamoud) did not and decided to migrate to the no-go zone between the two without informing the other side.

During seasons of drought, all nomadic communities, including belligerents, concentrate in a place that has pasture. The committee moves between the communities, sometimes staying with each clan for days to assess the situation and raise awareness of the need for peace. As one respondent observed:

We were staying [with] each side for two days. We go to the places particularly during the rainy season and stay [with] them for a while in their camps, conducting public awareness and establishing committees among the camel herders.<sup>63</sup>

## RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST BUILDING

Aside from fatalities and the destruction of property that inter-clan conflict causes, the breakdown of the social fabric that held society together is its most destructive consequence. When inter-clan conflicts erupt, social relations between two warring communities are damaged, which creates hostility, mistrust and animosity between them. Any reconciliation process should aim to normalize social reconciliation and relationship building. Trust building is very important for relationship transformation between community, as well as for reaching local agreements—even more important than designing technically sound agreements.<sup>64</sup>

Trust building leads to social cohesion, a requirement for social transformation. Odendaal argues that the socio-political and economic transformation of a society depends on a sufficient level of social cohesion, that cohesion takes time and that it is necessary to allocate specific responsibility for it to people at different levels of society.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, one of the functions of the Adadda Joint Peace Committee is to revive social relationships between the clans. Committee members stayed with each clan until people from the two grew closer. Once more confident, people from different clans would visit one another without bodyguards.<sup>66</sup>

During the Adadda conflict any interaction between the two communities was very difficult, even though many were close relatives and had been living as one community before the violence.

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63 Interview with Adadda joint peace committee chairman, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

64 Dekha and Mason, *Mediation and Governance in Fragile Contexts*.

65 Andries Odendaal, 'Cornerstones or scattered bricks: Comments on Paul van Tongeren's 'Potential cornerstone of infrastructures for peace? How local peace committees can make a difference'', *Peacebuilding* 1/1 (2013): 61-62.

66 Interview with Abdi Oogle Omar, Magacley, 9 February 2023.



Conflict turned the communities into enemies who killed each other on sight. Suspicions had to be allayed:

I remember, the last reconciliation meeting was held in their side. They took us from here [and] when we reached the other side, we met more than 300 armed men waiting for us. As a former soldier, I suspected their intentions, but they were protecting us from the community.<sup>67</sup>

The conflict displaced inhabitants:

A few years ago, I travelled 200kms into the other clan's territory but failed to see one person from the Majeerteen clan. Before the conflict, the majority of Qoriley's nomadic population were from Omar Mohamoud of Maajerteen.<sup>68</sup>

Respondents mentioned peace tours intended to increase the degree of trust. The JPC took members of one village to meet their relatives in the other village; they would stay with them for two or three days; then, the next time, those who had been guests would invite their hosts. Such exchanges engendered a sense of brotherhood between the two clans:

During our first trip, the whole community of Qoriley welcomed us because we were all relatives, me alone having more than 30 relatives, including grandchildren whom I had not seen for ten years. People regretted and felt the problem of the conflict.<sup>69</sup>

Another device used to build social relationships was organizing sports events for youth groups. Sports is a useful component of peacebuilding and social cohesion and can provide a platform to bring together communities affected by ethnic or religious divisions. 'We started with the youth because it is youth that are involved in conflicts more,' said one respondent.<sup>70</sup> The committee organised football matches, at home and away, to strengthen relations.<sup>71</sup>

## **FACILITATION OF COMMUNICATION**

When clan conflicts occur, communication is cut off between the two disputed communities. Before the Adadda JPC, this function was performed by the mediation committee, acting as an intermediary that facilitated communication. Unlike the peace committee members, however, the mediation committee members did not stay with the communities, and many of them came from far away places. Pastoralists notice if their livestock is missing for even a day. During

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67 Interview with JPC member, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

68 FGD participant, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

69 Interview with traditional elder and the chairman of the compensation committee, Burtinle, 29 February 2023.

70 Interview with member of the Joint peace committee, Qoriley, 11 February 2023.

71 Interview with JPC member, Xoorre, 11 February 2023.

conflict, they cannot go after it if it crosses into areas controlled by other clans. ‘When you see your animal crossing to the other side,’ said one study participant, ‘you cannot look for it, you cannot go after it. You cannot talk to someone else to care for it for you. Dozens [of livestock] were lost.’<sup>72</sup>

The JPC became the channel of communication that people use to convey their messages to one another. Its chairman said its role included mediating between disputed individuals and groups:

When the committee hears that two people have quarrelled, we go to meet them and solve [the problem]. For example last year there was a quarrel between two milk traders from the two clans, who threatened each other. We met with them and solved it.<sup>73</sup>

These findings are in line with the assertion that:

The joint peace committee enables communication among the protagonists to address the potentially destructive rumours, fears and mistrust...and to facilitate reconciliation and dialogue between the disputed sides via joint monitoring and joint planning for potentially violent events.<sup>74</sup>

Unhindered communication between the two sides allowed the conflicting parties to solve everything that could have jeopardized the peace process. But despite the Adadda committee’s relative success in peacebuilding, participants pointed out the difficulties involved in resolving the underlying causes of the conflict. It was long-term and intermediate causes that had turned the clan disagreement into violence. The long-term included the traditional structure of the Somali community, which fought for scarce resources such as water points and pasture. In the past, there were clashes between neighbouring clans, motivated by power struggles between the Siyad Barre government and rebel groups. Root causes included the artificial boundaries created before independence by the Italian and British colonial administrations, which at times demarcated boundaries between clans when they fought for the ownership of specific land.

The immediate cause of the conflict was given as the construction of water storage by one of the clans in 2005, which transformed the conflict into widespread violence. According to some respondents, conflicts that involve land ownership in Somalia are very difficult to resolve, because only the government can claim ownership of the land. Somalia is still lacking a fully functioning government that might monopolize its entire territory and the use of force within it.

It is difficult to solve conflicts related to land, and [they are] more likely to recur than

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72 FGD participant, Qoriley, 11 February 2023.

73 Interview with the chairman of the JPC, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

74 Oseremen Felix Irene and Alexander Ewanole Aikhoje, ‘Creating local peace committees: A participatory action research project in Ojoo’, *International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 5/4 (2016):67.

conflicts relating to killings, because the mediation committees cannot deal with the ownership of the land, only [the] government can do it.<sup>75</sup>

Despite these challenges, much has been done to resolve the longstanding causes of the conflict since the Meygaagle agreement in 2017. Study participants said its underlying causes were now deactivated, making the resumption of social relations and the implementation of the agreement the priorities.<sup>76</sup> A number of factors are attributed to the success of the Adadda joint peace committee.

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75 Interview with reconciliation expert, Garowe, 13 February 2023.

76 According to participants, during the last agreement, it was agreed this issue should be delayed. Other experts warned that such attempts to deal with the structural nature of the conflict might undermine the peace process.

# FACTORS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE ADADDA JOINT PEACE COMMITTEE

According to study participants, the Adadda JPC has been the most successful so far in managing the inter-clan conflict in Puntland. Conflict has not resumed in the last five years, and the two feuding communities have since lived together peacefully. Factors that facilitated success include its grassroots orientation, commitment from committee members and war weariness.

## GRASSROOTS LEVEL AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP

The concept of creating local peace committees is based on the notion that those affected by the conflict at hand have more incentive to end it than any outside party. This is because they are better placed to create and sustain peace.<sup>77</sup> The fact that LPCs are established at the grassroots level, where they have knowledge of the culture and context of the issues, as well as community relations, makes them succeed better than externally imposed peacebuilding processes.

Although local peace committees are by definition local, the question of how local needs to be clarified. In Somalia, inter-clan conflicts are managed by traditional elders from neighbouring clans, particularly during mediation, which sometimes make them external to the conflict.

If a local reconciliation process is to succeed, it is important to allow hostile communities to initiate it at grassroots level to resolve collective, outstanding issues.<sup>78</sup> Norman Chivasa attributes the success of local peace committees in Kenya, Colombia and the Philippines to local ownership of the process and lack of interference by the government.<sup>79</sup> The case of Adadda lines up, as the reconciliation process was initiated by two clans without an intermediary (after several initiatives had failed). It was this factor that ultimately led to sustaining peace.<sup>80</sup>

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77 Ngange, 'Local peace committees and grassroots peacebuilding.'

78 Abdulahi Odawa 'Traditional peacemaking in Sanaag region, Somaliland, in *War and Peace in Somalia: National Grievances, Local Conflict and Al-Shabaab*, eds. Michael Keating and Matt Waldman Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

79 Norman Chivasa, 'Building peace through local peace committees: An African experience' in *Infrastructures for peace in Sub-Saharan Africa*, eds. Mediel Hove and Geoff Harris, Zurich: Springer, 2019.

80 Interview with peacebuilding expert, Garowe, 14 February 2023.

Similarly, only the local communities were represented in the joint peace structures, with their effectiveness caused by the grassroots nature of the committee.

### COMMITMENT FROM THE LPC

The sincerity of the commitment of those involved in peacemaking has a positive impact on the success of a peace process.<sup>81</sup> When a local community comes together and decides to tackle challenges to peace, the success rate is very high. Its commitment compels local peace committees to manage and secure buy-in from the parties perpetuating the conflict.<sup>82</sup>

The Adaada situation could not have been ameliorated had the committee not been committed to resolving the conflict. During its formation, committee members swore they would be impartial even if a situation related to their families. This improved the level of trust among committee members.

The sacrifices they made and individual initiatives they took were illustrated by the member who travelled over 60kms on foot (from Magacley to Carris villages) without even informing his colleagues, when he heard about an incident that could have undermined the peace.<sup>83</sup>

### WAR WEARINESS

The recurring nature of inter-clan conflict results in great destruction to the warring sides. Wars require huge financial and logistical support, as the conflict might drag on for years, even decades. This draining of human life and property leads to war weariness among the clans affected. Hence, it also increases opportunities for achieving peace, as the majority of respondents pointed out:

We all felt that the war cannot bring any meaningful gain to either side. Then we discussed until we agreed it is not [in any] one's interest to continue the fighting. The fact that the conflict [was] prolonged and people became tired made this committee [work better] compared to previous committees.<sup>84</sup>

The issue of war weariness, or *bisayl* in the Somali language, as a facilitating factor for sustainable peace was mentioned by all most all participants. Their perspective is consistent with other studies on Somalia's traditional reconciliation processes, that 'war weariness can be a factor encouraging peace'.<sup>85</sup> As Kirbassov observed, an imbalance in the military capability of disputing clans is likely to prolong conflict and cause peace efforts to fail because the side with

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81 Odawa, 'Traditional Peacemaking in Sanaag'.

82 Chivasa, 'Building peace'.

83 FGD participant, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

84 Interview with female JPC member, Magacley, 9 February 2023.

85 Johson, 'The search for peace,' 57.

the momentum thinks it can use it and will not observe the agreement reached.<sup>86</sup> However, when both clans feel they can no longer continue, it becomes easier to make and build peace.

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86 Kisbassov, 'Determinants of Success: Analysis of Peace Initiatives.'

# CONCLUSION

The failure of Somali reconciliation mechanisms to prevent the recurrence of violent conflicts highlights the need to come up with a holistic approach that puts the same amount of effort into building and sustaining peace as it does into mediation. The success of the Adaada local peace committee illustrates that a key factor in the success of peace initiatives is establishing a committee that follows a peace agreement through and implements what was agreed. Such committees carry out a wide range of activities, including raising public awareness on peace. They act as a bridge between different stakeholders, such as elites and people at the grassroots, whose roles might otherwise impede the peace process.

Mediation committees play the largest part in Somali reconciliation processes. However, their role as outsider mediators and their composition as a technical team confines them to facilitate the process only up to the signature of the agreement. Yet, the test of whether the agreement fails or succeeds starts with the implementation of the agreement. A Joint Peace Committee complements the efforts of a mediation committee. The two are different in several ways: Unlike the male-dominated mediation committees, JPCs are inclusive, consisting of different segments of the population, including individual women, youth and elders.

JPCs are composed of people whose prestige goes beyond the conflict; they are grassroots actors who stay with the community and have knowledge of the context and the culture of the community. Mediation committees and Joint Peace Committees bear similarities in their approach to resolving conflicts though, as both use traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Joint Peace Committees face the same challenges as any other Local Peace Committee might—namely, inadequate funding, the volunteerism problem, and the lack of legitimacy that might cause their decisions to be left unenforced. The study challenges the notion that governments should play a role in the clan reconciliation process, apart from facilitating it and helping enforce the agreements reached. It concludes that peace agreements made between two clans without a third party intermediary are more effective than agreements brokered by mediation committees. The study suggests the need to emphasize relationship building if peace is to be sustained in the future.

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