

A DISCUSSION PAPER

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLAN CONFLICTS:
A DEADLY DUO FOR COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN
REGIONS OF SOMALILAND.**



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Figure 1: When Nature Cries: Witnessing the Somaliland Drought Photo Credits (ISIR)

ABSTRACT

Over the past ten years, inter-community conflicts have occasionally escalated into violent conflicts in the eastern regions of Somaliland¹. The effects of this violence are often experienced by the most vulnerable populations in these communities, including children, women, and the youth. Some of the immediate effects of the conflicts include the closure of schools and disruption of basic services as militia dispense brutal force overrunning limited government and police resources. This paper aims to explore the role and the effect of the declining of livestock resources on conflict and peace agreements. Somaliland faces a dilemma in this regard. It is abundantly clear across different post-conflict settings, that resources dedicated to violent conflict resolution are more than those allocated for peace building initiatives. In the eastern regions of Somaliland conflict leads to the loss of resources, including livestock, businesses, and properties. It also leads to mass migrations and, subsequently, Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) settlements. The effects of these violent conflicts are aggravated by the global phenomenon of climate change, which has seen Somaliland experience increasingly intense drought over the years due to overgrazing, soil erosion and destruction of trees. This has a huge impact on communities that are reliant on livestock as the key source of livelihood and resource to facilitate Diya (blood compensations)². The main objective of resources for peacebuilding is to find ways to support, implement, and sustain peace agreements. To achieve this objective, I suggest Somaliland consider resources for peace in two broad categories: community/clan resources and state resources. Community/clan resources, such as livestock and money, are critical, but the state's role in the distribution of resources is equally important.

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INTRODUCTION

Many countries around the world are grappling with the devastating impacts of climate change; unfortunately, the countries most affected by climate change are also impacted by or threatened by violence and instability, as the two elements work in concert to strengthen one another³. The global average temperature rising and is expected to alter the climate in many regions of the world⁴. There will be a variety of repercussions, including more severe droughts and shorter growing seasons in some regions, more storms and flooding in others, glaciers melting, and the formation of deserts⁵. In many areas, this will result in failed harvests, insufficient food supplies, and a rise in the insecurity of livelihoods when combined with the current strains on natural resources⁶. These additional effects will be particularly severe in nations where poverty, marginalization, inequality, and injustice are already pervasive.

It is safe to assume that the effects of climate change will combine with other factors to put additional strain on already fragile social and political systems, given everything we know about how mutually interlocking factors like poverty, poor governance, and the legacy of previous conflicts generate risks of new violence. Due to governments' arbitrary, incompetent, and corrupt nature, these are the circumstances in which conflicts

develop and cannot be settled without resorting to violence⁷.

In Africa, competition for resources has been identified as a major cause of pastoral conflicts. The competition emanates from, firstly, the marginalization of pastoral communities by central governments. Secondly, climate change has led to droughts lasting longer and reducing watering points, while the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the impact of colonialism, where arbitrary colonial boundaries separated people of similar cultures along national boundaries while grouping unrelated peoples for cohabitation, religious differences, ethnic marginalization, poor governance, and corruption have contributed heavily to violent conflict⁸.

There is evidence that climate change prevalent over the past decade and a half exacerbates an already fragile situation. Pastoralist communities, who rely on the ability to move their livestock across regions searching for water and grazing lands, have been the most affected by climate change. These affected the livestock; communities remain unable to pay blood compensation. Escalating violence between clans and political factions and prolonged drought have combined to produce a humanitarian emergency in eastern regions of Somaliland⁹. Somaliland is highly susceptible

to the effects of climate change, which manifests in extreme weather conditions, such as periods of extended drought and flash floods. Many severe weather events have occurred in the past 25 years, which have had a negative impact on the agricultural and livestock sector of Somaliland, the most important sector for the Somaliland economy.

While the higher-order conflict in Somaliland is political, violence at the community level is driven by competition among clans. Population growth, overuse of existing natural resources, and poor resource management have stretched a fragile ecosystem to the breaking point. As a result, Somali clans often fight over diminishing resources, such as water and range land. In the past, traditional leaders played a key role in resolving emerging conflicts. However, the monumental loss of livestock to droughts, which was the primary means for blood compensation, impacts the extent to which traditional leaders can play a critical role in managing conflict.

The Somaliland National Development Plan (2023-2027)¹⁰ highlights an ongoing shift away from nomadic, pastoralist livelihoods, driven by urban population growth and increasing urbanization, mainly caused by rural-urban migration. Half of the total population of Somaliland already lives in urban and peri-urban environments. Recurrent droughts and flooding, which are caused or intensified by climate change, have resulted in increased internal displacement, often translating into inflows of migrants from rural areas to urban centres. These migratory patterns have triggered land (and other) forms of disputes between IDPs and permanent inhabitants.

SYNOPSIS OF THE LITERATURE PROBING CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT

Most sub-Saharan African and several Horn of Africa Countries are implementing policies and strategies to prevent, mitigate and adapt to climate change effects¹¹. Governments and other non-governmental stakeholders started to access and utilize the technology and other technical expertise tested by advanced economies and societies¹² in this regard. Conflicts in Sub-Saharan African countries lead to socially, politically, and economically vulnerable communities and individuals, who confront considerable impediments in tackling the effects of climate change¹³. In the past two decades, climate change has posed a risk to peace and stability. Recurring droughts are affecting people across Africa. These impacts are also increasing competition for natural resources - all dynamics that are well-established drivers of conflict¹⁴.

Subsequently, climate change has increasingly contributed to environmental, social, economic, and political pressures in both rural and urban areas¹⁵. As a result, as shown in many post-conflict settings¹⁶, it increases conflicts, which later escalated into violent conflicts and disrupt fragile peace structures¹⁷. In turn, conflict and political instability leave communities poorer and less resilient to climate change shocks. This is especially true in post-conflict settings like Somaliland, where the capacity of state institutions and local community structures to cope or adopt to climate changes is limited¹⁸. There are several climate fragility risks that are identified by several advanced economies¹⁹, and which will affect the horn of Africa peace and stability in the decades ahead²⁰. These risks include, natural resource competition, migration, limited capacity to manage disasters, volatile food prices, weak water management, and the absence of effective climate change policies.

Violent conflict and climate change have a complicated and contentious relationship. The scientific evidence is not as conclusive as some media headlines have suggested. In fact, whether and how climatic factors significantly raise the likelihood of armed conflict has been the subject of a contentious discussion among the scientific community²¹. Burke et al. (2009) asserted that there has historically been a strong correlation between civil war and high temperatures in Africa. By combining their research with climate projections, they calculated that by 2030, there will have

been a 54% rise in armed conflict, with an additional 393,000 battle-related deaths brought on by temperature increases.

In recent years, researchers have put forth several theorized causal processes linking conflict, security, and climate change. For instance, Barnett proposed that at a political scale, the effectiveness of the government, and the availability or scarcity of natural resources are major determinants of the chance that conflict may arise as a result of climate change²². Similarly, Bretthauer suggested that agricultural dependence and low levels of education increase the likelihood of armed conflict resulting from climate change²³. Seter identified three factors—economic conditions, resource levels, and migration driven by economic pressures—connecting climate change and conflict. While there is a direct link between climate change and conflict²⁴, other researchers have emphasized that there are also many indirect links, ranging from agricultural and economic production to demographic-related pressures²⁵.

Accordingly, individual paths to insecurity are more likely to result from people's unique experiences of environmental change in the context of larger societal structures and processes than from a “one scenario fits all” approach²⁶. As mentioned below, some researchers contend that rather than being a primary factor in human instability and violence, climate change serves as a “danger multiplier”. In other words, as mentioned by Buhaug²⁷, regions already predisposed to armed conflict as a result of poor levels of human development are also predisposed to climate change²⁸. The next section focuses on this.



Figure 2: A Harsh Reality The Devastating Drought in Somaliland Photo Credits (ISIR)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLAN CONFLICTS IN SOMALILAND: A REVIEW OF CURRENT REALITIES, TRENDS, AND ISSUES

For the last 100 years, more than 22 major droughts of varied intensity have been documented and occurred in Somaliland territory. Droughts are named in relation to their intensity, impact or severity, as well as how they impacted or affected the of Somalis, especially the rural population. As the National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR) stated, the intervals between droughts are becoming increasingly shorter—every two to three years—in comparison to past droughts, which occurred at longer intervals of five to ten years. A UNOCHA report on drought published in March 2017 highlights the severity of the current drought and its lasting impact on affected areas. The report noted that drought patterns have continued to worsen and spread more widely since the last quarter of 2016. Additionally, 50% of Somaliland population have been affected by droughts. Pastureland and water, on which the livelihoods of the rural population largely depend, have been completely affected and depleted in some areas of Somaliland.

Recurrent and persistent drought has

caused crops to fail, and livestock which is the backbone of rural population to die in many parts of Somaliland, resulting in severe food and water shortages. Recurrent droughts have driven thousands of people from the rural areas which was their homes and caused others in need of food and water to survive. According to the 2019 UNOCHA report, approximately 500,000 people in drought-hit areas have been displaced, many moving to urban centres, and more than half million people in Somaliland have faced alarming levels of hunger and need intervention to survive. In response to the growing threats of drought, the Somaliland Government established a committee in 2018, the National Drought Response Committee. The committee was formed to coordinate different response agencies including the UN and other non-governmental bodies, and also to raise funds. Later, the committee started to intervene and support those severely affected by the droughts.

Somaliland has a recent history of building successful governance structures from the bottom up, which, combined with clan grievances that stretch back for

decades, and possibly even centuries, presents a unique and challenging context for any development partner. In the present-day, clan grievances tend to drive the division of communities, and prudently negotiated arrangements between clan elders in the past are increasingly being challenged by the young, urbanized population. This division is often intensified by a scarcity of employment opportunities. Traditional agro-pastoral lifestyles are becoming less tenable, and people are gradually turning to urban centres with decreasing likelihood of them returning to traditional livelihoods such as pastoralism.

Although drought spreads and increases the levels of conflicts in the eastern regions of Somaliland – with possible spill-over into other regions, as is already the case in Togdheer region, – climate change was not factored into the resource- allocation from the Somaliland government and the other development support provided by traditional donors through the international non-governmental organizations.

The eastern region of Somaliland continues to rely on economic practices such as herding livestock; these practices are suited to the semi-arid parts of Somaliland and Somalia, where the cultivation of crops is difficult. While droughts are not an uncommon occurrence in Somaliland and Somalia, the frequency and duration of droughts experienced in recent years are worrying. Between 1950 and 2000, there

were three droughts, each lasting an average of four months. Between 2000 and 2022, there were six droughts, each lasting six months on average. The eastern regions of Somaliland had barely recovered from the 2017 drought when the 2022 drought struck.

In Somaliland, climate change has caused resource-based conflicts between clans and²⁹ contributed to increased internal displacements, for example, the El-Afwayn conflict. While competition and disputes over land and resources sometimes result in violence, they also contribute to nepotism and corruption in government. Land disputes have also occurred over the alienation of government-owned lands that were originally intended to be held in trust for the public. The absence of accountability and transparency in government, especially in regard to the distribution of land and other scarce resources, negatively impacts the relationship between the government and the public. The government's inability to quell inter-clan armed clashes has eroded public confidence in the central government's ability to maintain peace and stability in the long term. These disputes, and the inability of the judiciary to efficiently deal with an increase in the disputes, have also negatively affected trust and confidence in the central government.

Somaliland continues to be highly vulnerable to climate change and its effects. This increase of vulnerability is moulded by its livestock resource

dependency and low adaptive capacity due to recurrent conflicts. In eastern the regions of Somaliland, increasing temperatures and variation in the timing and intensity of annual rainfall negatively affect the livestock and worsen livelihood insecurity. Women and girls are particularly affected by the consequences of climate change, owing to gender norms invested in the Somaliland traditional system. Furthermore, the effects of climate change are felt in numerous sectors – agriculture, water, and the environment – all affecting the lives of Somaliland citizens. However, responses to climate change in the eastern regions of Somaliland have been inadequate and significantly affected by clan conflict and the clan-based resource and political competition.

The relationship between the increase of inter-clan conflicts and droughts in eastern regions of Somaliland is obvious. Young males who are affected by loss of livestock and food insecurity and who face no job prospects are easily persuaded to join clan conflicts. Rangelands were converted into small settlements near the main roads between the main cities of the eastern regions of Somaliland, greatly reducing pasture for the young men's livestock. As a result, the youth end up joining clan conflicts in search of alternative livelihoods.

While state-building efforts in Somaliland have been reasonably successful, particularly in comparison to Somalia,

there are several dynamics that drive fragility and pose a risk for the local conflict resolution and management approaches. As a result of state-led policies, Somaliland remains committed to democracy and development, but there are signs of an increase in pressure and concerns about a return to civil war which have led to political repression³⁰.

Monopolisation of power in the executive arm of the government has led political leaders to turn away from clan-based governance to democratic governance, but this move has not improved inclusive participation in governance, nor strengthened institutional arrangements and services³¹. The government cultivates trust with certain clans, business groups and network of advisers from particular constituencies rather than confabulating state bodies, which contributes to a feeling of marginalisation among certain clans and constituencies that are excluded from high-level decision-making³².

Tensions caused by the lack of government consultation with constituencies outside of its clan power base are intensified by gaps in public service provision and high unemployment, especially amongst the youth, which leaves them vulnerable to engaging in conflicts and other criminal acts³³. In addition, the high military presence in the eastern regions and the ongoing Las-Anod conflict both deteriorated the situation in the eastern regions. Furthermore, the Sool and Sanaag

regions have witnessed a series of inter-clan conflicts that resulted in the loss of life and property (see Table 1). In these regions, rivalry within and/or between the Isaaq (Habaryonis and HabarJeclo) clans and Dhulbahante clans have become increasingly tense over the past decade, while the relationships between the central government in Hargeisa and the traditional elders, which are fundamental for resolving recurring clan conflicts in the area, have been undermined by the influence of political leaders that use traditional leaders to sway voting patterns during elections.

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS CONFLICT

The consequences of climate change are constantly dependent on political, economic, and social factors. To further explore how and when climate change influences conflict, this study explored Somaliland's experiences in a bid to provide an understanding of why violent conflict occurs in some communities that experience climate change extremes but not in others. Even in the nations where rainfall variability has the greatest impact on food production. This study found that worsening climatic conditions in Somaliland increase livestock danger. Migration is also a major connector of climatic fluctuation to conflict, although the area is still under-researched. Migration decisions may be influenced by environmental stress, which in turn heightens competition for land. In this regard, migration serves as a means of environmental adaptation as well as a possible source of conflict³⁴.

One, if not the most important, aspect that has a considerable impact on the risk that climate change poses is state policy, which, for example, shapes the outcomes of environmental migration³⁵. Evidence from Somaliland and other parts of the Horn of Africa indicates that the wrong policies can be disastrous, but more comprehensive research on the relationship between climate change and state policies is needed. In the El-Afwayn region of Somaliland, land degradation brought on by climate change and rising instability in the eastern regions of Somaliland have pushed pastoralists to migrate in search of pasture and water, leading to frequent fights with other clans. Traditional migration routes are obstructed by the expansion of private enclosures, which limits communal pastures. An anti-enclosure administrative regulation was issued by the Somaliland Ministry of Environment, which increased already-high tensions

between farmers and herders. This regulation forbade enclosures and encouraged the traditional pastoralist communities to use land communally by allowing unrestricted livestock access. The regulations ignore the traditional way of using land, introduce state power that is not fully functional in those districts, and cannot enforce decisions. This sparked violent attacks between owners of the enclosures and the pastoralist communities resulting in the deaths of dozens of people both inside and outside.

The Somaliland government's divisive policies are key risk factors as well, but state actions can also promote social mechanisms that serve to lessen the impact of climatic changes on violent conflict³⁶. Inter-clan community interaction, for instance, the joint/common use of water points in the villages near El-Afwayn, prevents a drought-related violent conflict in the Sanaag Region. Such inter-community interactions amidst deteriorating weather conditions reduced people's tolerance for violence. However, violent conflict has occurred in instances where communities need to establish new settlements after being forced to migrate to escape the harsh effects of climate change such as an acute shortage of water. The communities seek to settle in areas near main roads, for easy access to government and NGOs' relief food and emergency assistance. In efforts to establish these settlements, these clans may cross borders into other clans' territories, leading to conflict.

In El Afweyn District, there have been recurrent conflicts within the Isaq clans (Bicido who are Habar Jeclo and Sacad Yonis who are Habar Yonis) which, as of September 28 2023, led to the loss of more than 119 lives³⁷. Though the Somaliland Government and traditional leaders managed to put an end to the conflict in El Afweyn District, through the establishment of steep Diya compensation, the security and inter-community relationships are fragile. The peace agreement was composed but the local community has raised concerns over the legitimacy of external interventions since they are developed and implemented without consultations with the local communities, thus becoming an imposition. In El Afweyn, a lack of implementation of the agreements causes the recurrence of violent conflicts, since Blood compensation or Diya compensation is considered one of the religious obligations imposed by Sharia. The unpaid blood compensation is mostly due to a shortage of the livestock and that caused difficulties for communities to pay within the agreed-upon timelines of payment of the Diya. This triggers a revenge act by the victims. The Diya compensations are a major component of the Somali justice system and are meant to facilitate forgiveness and prevent families from seeking revenge against each other. However, droughts occasioned by climate change have made them increasingly difficult to pay, and economic hardships make it almost impossible to pay the monetary equivalent of the livestock required.

Table 1: Summary and status of El-Afwayn and other similar Cases.

Conflict area	No. of casualties	Intervention	Paid Diya	Not Paid Diya	Timeline of Balance payment
El-Afwayn of Sanaag Region	119 Died. 283+ Wounded	Resolved, agreed Diya	30%	70%	No timeline
Shidan of Sanaag region	10 Died 21 Wounded	Resolved, agreed Diya	\$10,000 of pre-Diya paid	100%	Not specified (no timeline)
Dhumay of Sool region	86 Died 150+ wounded	Resolved, agreed Diya	75%	25%	Not specified (no timeline)
Dhabar-dalool of Hudun, Sool region	55 Died 87 + wounded	Majority of the issues Resolved, agreed Diya	0	100%	Not specified (no timeline)

Source: *Interview with traditional leader*

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMPETITION OVER RESOURCES IN SOMALILAND

Land rights and land ownership claims are major causes of conflicts, particularly in the eastern regions. While the Horn of Africa has an arid climate generally, Somaliland has been mainly affected by climate change due to changes in rain patterns and a reduction in total rainfall, which is intensified by a lack of basic water infrastructure, especially in rural places. In this way, climate change intensifies an already fragile situation in eastern parts of Somaliland. Because agriculture (both farming and livestock) is the primary means of livelihood for the majority of people, the economy is extremely susceptible to shocks caused by climate change,

particularly recurrent droughts. Climate change already causes recurrent droughts in certain areas of Somaliland, which, in turn, increases the scarcity of natural resources, primarily arable land for farming and grazing cattle, and access to water. Thus, climate change is a cause of food and water insecurity, and a contributing factor to resource scarcity in general.

Clan competition over these resources sparks disputes, which sometimes ignite into armed conflict. For example, water shortage causes conflict because when there is drought, pastoralists send their livestock to graze on farmland, causing conflict, like the 2020 conflict in South of Buraq district. When their livestock became endangered, pastoralists began to siphon water from the irrigation systems of nearby farms. This siphoning of water led to a dispute between the farmers and the pastoralists, and because the parties involved were from different clans, the dispute deteriorated into inter-clan violence. Conflicts such as this one is centred on disputes related to land and resources that have increased due to climate change.

Sometimes, the shortage of arable land and water becomes so tricky that both farmers and pastoralists are forced to abandon their traditional way of life and drift away from rural areas and into urban centres. This migration, in turn, causes conflict between internally displaced populations and their host communities in urban centres. Beyond such disputes, high rates of rural-to-urban migration also create other tensions, including a

decrease in the supply of commodities, thereby increasing prices of these commodities, especially food products such as milk and meat. It also reduces the accessibility of these products for the newly urban poor. The impacts of climate change seem to affect women and vulnerable groups more rigorously since they do not have the resources and capabilities to respond and adapt to the crisis. When a drought occurs, poor and vulnerable members of the community struggle as they are not part of the community decision-making structures.

In the future, as climate change, ongoing inter-clan conflicts over land, water, and other natural resources can be expected. These conflicts are most likely to occur in the rural areas where access to water and grazing land is disputed, particularly in the Sool, and Sanaag regions. In addition, internal migratory flows are likely to continue unabated, leading to increased tensions between displaced populations and urban inhabitants, and additional pressures on already strained infrastructure and government institutions, such as the police and the judiciary. Moreover, migrants moving from rural places into the urban centres often do not have the education, training, or skills necessary to earn a living in urban settings.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND STATE RESOURCES

Livestock production has been the backbone economy and livelihood of Somaliland. Livestock production contributes 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and about 85% of foreign export earnings³⁸. Livestock is the main source of pastoral/rural livelihoods, contributes to government income (revenue) and provides employment to a wide range of professionals and other service providers. In Somali society, clans are the main social association for communities and are used for protection, welfare, and access to shared resources. Historically clans and sub-clans contested over scarce resources – mainly pasture, land and water. A customary system, known as Xeer, was established by the Somali traditional leaders (Elders) to resolve conflicts and preserve the security and co-existence between clans. Xeer is mainly based on Islamic rulings and existing agreements between clans.

Conflict resolution and dispute resolution often involve a combination of community and state resources in the Somali context. In the initial stages of conflict resolution, community resources are crucial. Traditional leaders and elders hold significant influence in Somali society, which is organized along clan lines. These figures are crucial in

mediating disputes and negotiating settlements, drawing upon their deep understanding of customary law and the unique dynamics of the community. They help bring disputing parties together, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation processes, which is often the first step in resolving conflicts.

The use of livestock to pay blood compensation is deeply ingrained in Somali tradition and is a critical aspect of resolving conflicts. In this practice, the number and type of livestock offered as compensation vary depending on the severity of the offence and the customs of the particular community involved. Livestock, often in the form of camels, is symbolic of wealth and prestige, and their transfer as compensation is seen as a means to restore honour and dignity to the victim's family. The use of livestock for blood compensation also helps foster reconciliation and forgiveness between the parties involved, as it represents a tangible and culturally significant way to make amends. While this practice is rooted in tradition, it must operate within the framework of the law, and state resources are instrumental in ensuring that compensation is equitable, fair, and follows established legal guidelines.

State resources, on the other hand, come

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into play when conflicts escalate beyond the capacity of local community leaders to handle. In such cases, Somaliland Government authorities and the judicial have played a crucial role by issuing comprehensive guidelines and directives regarding camel values in the conventional marketplace and enabling clans to transition to monetary compensation when fulfilling blood compensation obligations. These measures have not only facilitated a more transparent and accountable system for evaluating camel worth but have also paved the way for a more modern and efficient approach to traditional practices, aligning them with contemporary legal and economic standards while preserving cultural traditions and principles of justice. The state's involvement in these urban-base-cases ensures that the compensation is measured and executed fairly, according to established legal procedures, preventing further escalation of violence, and ensuring justice is served.



Figure 3: In the Throes of Dry Desolation: Somaliland's Drought Crisis Photo Credits (ISIR)

CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE MECHANISM

Nomadic pastoralists in parts of Somaliland who depend on livestock for their livelihoods have experienced huge losses in recent months. Surveys conducted by the Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO) among people affected by drought in the Togdheer, Sool and Sanaag regions of Somaliland found that 61% of families reported they had lost all their livestock, which led them to migrate into the urban centres³⁹. Therefore, for the above matters related to drought livelihood erosions, especially the livestock, the Somaliland pastoralist and agro-pastoralist lifestyles are on the brink of collapse due to recurrent droughts.

Somaliland has a climate change response mechanism which includes the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, the National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR) and the National Drought Council (NDC), comprised of key government ministries headed by the vice-president of Somaliland, and which is activated on a need basis. In some cases, overlapping institutional mandates undermine efforts to address climate change issues. In addition, the lack of institutional clarity, roles and

responsibilities among governmental agencies engaged in climate change-related mandates and agendas may challenge the implementation of efforts to tackle climate change risks. While political commitment and leadership are key, given the current Somaliland climate change governance structures, the responsibility for actual policy implementation lies with the government but for the purposes of efficiency this should have been delegated to local community led institutions. There are also limited climate change commitments when there is a decoupling of national vision and strategies with local actions and priorities. For instance, while climate change priorities such as drought management, disaster preparedness, and others were a broad unambiguously mentioned in national development plan Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, NADFOR and NDC, budget allocation did not follow the same prioritization.

The large scope of these institutions, with new areas and various cross-cutting climate change related issues, will require institutional collaboration, innovation and incentive systems that facilitate action and accountability across sectors as well as across government

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levels. There are no institutional and coordination structures to effectively support the implementation of climate change related priorities and efforts. This negatively affects the capacity of the government to deal with the impact of climate change, including increase of resource based communal conflicts.



Figure 4: Unyielding Dry Spell: The Somaliland Drought's Struggle for Survival Photo Credits (ISIR)

CONCLUSION

There is increasing recognition of the influence of human actions on climate change, and its consequences. Shifts in rain patterns, increasing droughts, and frequent changes in temperature are among the consequences that eastern regions and the rest of Somaliland regions are experiencing. If left unattended, climate change effects will worsen insecurity, and may lead to social unrest and further instability in Somaliland.

Somaliland has been particularly affected by climate change, with significant shifts in rain patterns and a reduction in total rainfall. This situation, combined with the lack of basic water infrastructure, especially in rural areas, is having a negative impact on both farmers and herders. Because agriculture (both farming and livestock) is the primary source of livelihood for the population of Somaliland, its economy is extremely susceptible to the shocks caused by climate change, especially recurrent droughts. These phenomena are increasing the scarcity of natural resources, primarily arable land for farming and grazing cattle, and are making access to water much more cumbersome, contributing to the mounting competition over land and natural resources.

The increased competition over these resources is threatening peace and stability. Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, which have always occurred, are intensifying and are becoming increasingly intractable. Land usage and tenure rights are primary triggers of these conflicts, particularly in rural areas. In addition to urbanization, climate change threatens traditional ways of life. Nomadic pastoralists, who are forced to abandon their traditional ways of life and migrate to urban centres due to droughts and flooding, often do not have the education, training, or skills necessary to provide for themselves in an urban location.

Livestock production in Somaliland, a significant segment of the agricultural sector, is anchored to a pastoral system that relies on fragile natural resources, and traditionally, pastoralists have effectively governed water access and grazing in their lands through clan power structures. Increasingly, there are competing claims over both land and natural resources, which are becoming scarce or less productive, as a result of climate stress, population growth and urbanization.

Regarding the community recourses, livestock is the typical Diya payment, in the case of murder, injury, and similar offences. Clans and subclans come to verbal agreements with each other to define the type, the level and amount livestock applicable in each case. Despite this verbal agreement, Diya is strictly under commonly accepted principles and between clans and subclans. Livestock was the primary means to achieve Diya payments for Somali rural communities, however the climate change has affected both the livestock quality and quantity, and inability to pay Diya to victims, leading to revenge and further violence.

What can be done?

These below recommendations serve as a starting point for El-Afwayn clan conflict, and tailored approaches are necessary to address the specific needs and context of each community.

1. Strengthen Community Resilience: To improve the lives of communities affected by climate change and clan conflicts, it is crucial to focus on building their resilience. This can be achieved by providing a government led access to essential services such as clean water, healthcare, and education. Additionally, supporting sustainable livelihoods through training programs and small-scale agricultural initiatives can help communities adapt to changing environmental conditions and reduce their vulnerability.

2. Promote Conflict Resolution and alternatives to livestock blood compensation: Addressing clan conflicts are vital for community well-being. Efforts should be made to promote dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties. With decreasing livestock, new methods of Diya compensation should be employed. Similar to the methods adopted in the urban areas (cities), blood compensation should be in the form of money, with equivalent value to the number of camels required for a particular incident such as death, injury or defamation.

3. Enhance Environmental Conservation: Climate change exacerbates environmental challenges, leading to further conflicts and hardships for communities. Conservation efforts, such as reforestation and sustainable land management, can help mitigate the impact of climate change and restore ecosystems. Encouraging sustainable practices, like promoting renewable energy sources and responsible waste management, will contribute to both environmental preservation and community well-being.

4. Foster Collaborative Partnerships: Addressing the complex challenges of climate change and clan conflicts requires collaboration between various stakeholders. Governments, non-governmental organizations, local business leaders and local communities should work together to implement comprehensive strategies. Sharing knowledge, expertise, and resources among these partners can lead to more sustainable and impactful interventions. By fostering collaborative partnerships, communities can amplify the positive impact on the lives of affected communities and create a more resilient future.

About the author:

Hamdi I. Abdulahi is a development professional with experience in multiple assignments and across portfolios on governance, justice, and legal, for government institutions, the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions.

Hamdi completed his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research on apprising the plural justice at the United Nations University for Peace. Hamdi is also holding double master's degrees, a Master of Arts (MA) in Peacebuilding and Human Security from Coventry University, UK, and a Master of Laws (LLM) from the Kampala International University, Uganda. Hamdi's research interest and publications span both governance and justice. Much of Hamdi's work has been on improving the understanding of the social issues, and the performance of government.

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Figure 5: Desertification's Grip Somaliland's Battle Against Drought Photo Credits (ISIR)

ENDNOTES

- 1 The eastern regions of Somaliland are Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer
- 2 is a traditional practice in some cultures and legal systems where monetary compensation is paid to the family or relatives of a victim as a form of restitution for a crime or wrongdoing committed against them. This compensation is intended to provide a means of reconciliation and justice, often in cases of murder or severe injury, as an alternative to punitive measures like imprisonment or the death penalty. In the case of death, the amount of blood compensation for Somaliland context is 100 camels for men and 50 camels for females, and it varies widely on injuries depending on severity and cultural norms.
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Hamdi Ismail Abdulahi

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