

# Clans, contention and consensus Federalism and inclusion in Galmudug

June 2020

HW

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# Clans, contention and consensus

## **Federalism and inclusion in Galmudug**

## Acknowledgements

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Saferworld, Conciliation Resources and International Alert are collaborating on a three-year research programme, the Peace Research Partnership, which generates evidence and lessons for policymakers and practitioners on how to support peaceful, inclusive change in conflict-affected areas. Funded by UK aid from the UK government, the research focuses on economic development, peace processes, institutions and gender drivers of conflict.

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**Cover photo: A delegate votes during the electoral process to choose members of the Lower House of the federal parliament in Adaado, Somalia on 29 November 2016.**

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Road entering Adaado city,  
Galmudug.  
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# Executive summary

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**2020 is a crucial year for Somalia. Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, 'one person, one vote'<sup>1</sup> elections had been planned for the first time in 50 years, and the government had also committed to adopting an amended constitution by June.<sup>2</sup> The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is facing major changes, with a United Nations (UN) Security Council mandated independent assessment due to review international engagement in Somalia and present new options for security arrangements post-2021.**

Such advances are both subject to and will shape the country's successful transition to an effective federal state. Set in motion with the 2012 Provisional Constitution, federalism aimed to address many of the challenges facing the country since the breakdown of the central state in the 1990s, as competing powerholders violently contested political and territorial control.

Federalism and other forms of decentralisation have been adopted by a number of countries in recent decades in efforts to address protracted conflict and instability. Inclusion goes hand in hand with discussions of decentralisation and has increasing resonance for international peacebuilding and development discourse. The 2018 UN and World Bank report, *Pathways for Peace*,<sup>3</sup> asserts that 'making institutions more inclusive' is key to conflict prevention. However, the accommodation of some groups may come at the expense of others, and invariably there are trade-offs. In particular, short-term gains in securing the inclusion of some groups may come at the expense of longer-term, more sustainable benefits. These trade-offs are rarely simple and often reflect the informal power structures that shape a particular society's social relations.

This report considers how federalism has progressed in Somalia, looking particularly at the experience of the federal member state (FMS) of Galmudug. Based on primary research in five locations in Galmudug, it examines how the assumed benefits of decentralisation – more proximate and accountable authorities, improved public services, and more responsive security and justice – play out in a context where clan structures shape social and political life. It considers if federalism has opened up avenues for political representation and inclusion – an important indicator of the possibilities for universal suffrage and the ‘one person, one vote elections’ planned for 2020/21; enabled a closer relationship between populations and political elites; and ultimately provided a conducive environment for peace and stability. Galmudug’s experience, despite its particular contextual complexities, offers valuable insights into Somalia’s overall political transition to a federal state, as well as more broadly on the implications of different approaches to decentralisation in conflict-affected and fragile states. The report concludes with recommendations for Somali and international donors and organisations.

Galmudug’s state formation process has arguably been the most contested and one of the least advanced of all the Somali states. Yet the (ongoing) process is in many ways emblematic of the country’s complicated federal project – and of the efforts to bring together contending clans through the formation of federal states, as well as to balance their relations with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).

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The report finds that decentralisation, whether in a federal form or not, is not a simple remedy for fragmented states.

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The report finds that decentralisation, whether in a federal form or not, is not a simple remedy for fragmented states. Five years into Galmudug’s federal project and there are some positive signs: administrative structures have been established in some districts; overall security has improved; security cooperation has been possible between clan-based forces; and provision of some services is available at the district rather than national level. However, in reality, a range of state and non-state authorities are involved in providing public amenities. Private companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a major role in the provision of healthcare, water, electricity and education, while security and justice are still largely administered through clan structures – primarily clan forces and elders, as well as the use of *Xeer* norms (the customary system that determines social relations).

Consensus building and contestation are primary features of federalisation in Galmudug. The FMS was forged through consensus building between its clans. The ‘Adaado process’ of 2015 was unprecedented in bringing together the 11 clans of Galguduud and South Mudug regions to negotiate a power-sharing framework as the basis of a new Galmudug state. Galmudug is also significant as it has accommodated the Sufi armed organisation Ahlu Sunnah Wal’Jamaa (ASWJ) into its political structure.<sup>4</sup> ASWJ agreed to merge its political and armed forces into those of Galmudug state, and gained a number of seats in the federal state parliament.

It is clear, however, that the state formation process has not stopped with the creation of a regional parliament or its expansion to include ASWJ, but is instead an ongoing process of negotiation and testing of relationships among Galmudug’s various powerholders, and between regional political leaders and the FGS – often escalating into violence as security forces aligned to different clans or factions are drawn in.

While negotiation to build consensus and accommodate powerholders has been central to developing the federal state, internal and external contestation over boundaries, powers and mandates has also been prominent. Federalism has established a new arena for competition and assertion of control (of territory, political positions and economic resources) between clans and with neighbouring regions, and in particular with the FGS.

The primacy of clan structures and hierarchies for federalisation in Somalia is evident in its political processes. The so-called ‘4.5 principle’ determines how political positions are shared between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ clans.<sup>5</sup> ‘Election’ processes – at national, federal state and district level – are in fact based on selection by clan elder-led committees. The Somali notion of ‘inclusion’ is therefore primarily linked to clan inclusion: whether a person’s clan is part of negotiation processes, holds political office or has its needs met.

The creation of new sub-national political posts, the associated benefits of these and a (s)election system based on clan power-sharing has resulted in clan competition over political office, as well as clan-based service provision and access to resources – even where services are privately financed or administered by NGOs. The personal benefits of running for office often encourage politicians to make deals with others, particularly clan elders or private companies, rather than pursuing a development agenda for the benefit of their constituents. There are indications that an emergent political class of selected representatives are developing interests and pursuing relations with

business leaders and external actors independent of clan interests – with potentially positive and negative implications for accountability and state development.

The selection process also puts a limit on the possibility for broader inclusion of other social groups. Wealth and the ability to wield influence and bring benefits to the clan are the main factors that influence selection. Women, young people and those from minority clans lack the access to resources or influence that older men and those from larger, wealthier and more established clans have, with women seen as a ‘risky choice’ for a political (clan) representative. It is easier to gain a seat at the less influential district level, where the scope for civil society advocacy is also greater – evidenced in the vast increase in youth and women’s organisations in every district of Galmudug. Initiatives such as the women’s shadow parliament, set up in five localities in Galmudug, provide a platform for women’s advocacy at the district level and help prepare women to run for office. The women’s shadow parliament is a promising development, but the ability to influence decision-making is vulnerable to co-option by powerholders such as clan elders and politicians. Decision-making and participation are still relatively hierarchical.

While Somalia’s federal system is built on enduring clan structures and systems, it is also shrouded, arguably deliberately, in ambiguity. The formation of Galmudug from 1.5 regions (rather than the constitutionally mandated two or more) suggests an approach of expediency over consistency. A particular Somali form of federalism is emerging, based on institution building ‘from the ground up’, through clan negotiations rather than determined by the central government in Mogadishu or by international partners. Yet this constructive ambiguity, evident in the legal and constitutional tools of federalism, is also one of the biggest stumbling blocks to state formation, as it demands continual and protracted negotiation between powerholders on the rules and procedures of fiscal and political federalism. Existing mechanisms, such as the ten independent commissions set out in the 2012 Provisional Constitution, could help clarify contested areas and adjudicate on disputes between the FGS and federal member states (FMSs), but have to date been limited in their powers.

Decentralisation in general – and federalisation in particular – is a hugely costly and logistically demanding undertaking, requiring a massive amount of resources (both finance and capacity) targeting national, sub-national and local institutional infrastructure. For Somalia, the question of federalism is perhaps no longer whether

it is applicable, but how it should be implemented. Continued consensus building is essential to move the federal project forward, but for the model to more effectively bring dividends to the Somali population there needs to be greater accountability, and clearer delineation of political roles and responsibilities between FMSs and the FGS. It is also important to be aware of the limitations of a system that is grounded in clan structures to support broader accountability and participation of groups normally marginalised from decision-making. Initiatives such as the shadow parliament are a notable platform for women to access the political arena, and while their impact and influence need to be critically assessed, they can also be avenues for rigorous debate on longer-term transformative change. Somali civil society has an important role in crafting much needed public debate and awareness on federalisation, by sharing information widely on its processes; shaping public discourse and facilitating discussion on accountability and meaningful participation; and working with authorities to enable change. International partners, who have played a significant role in Galmudug’s state formation process through support for political dialogue and infrastructure, also have a crucial role in helping to reconcile the immediate objective of establishing a functional power-sharing system with longer-term objectives of sustainable, stable and inclusive institutions.

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# Recommendations

## Institutional capacity and service provision

Widespread poverty means that food and livelihood insecurity are of foremost concern to communities. Efforts to strengthen service provision must take into account the range and configuration of parties involved in providing security, justice, services and employment, and should develop accountability both between service providers and with communities. They should also be based on an understanding that Somalis expect to derive benefits from and through their clan affiliation, even when services are delivered by a variety of state and non-state institutions and channelled through clan lines and gatekeepers.

To international donors and organisations:

- Support the FGS to develop and resource district-level administrative structures and capacities.
- Evaluate how service provision is provided in a specific location to assess effectiveness and gaps.
- Link support to FMSs to commitments from and mechanisms for members of parliament (MPs) to spend time in their constituencies outside of selection cycles.
- Support public awareness programmes of formal security providers, and community outreach and engagement by police forces.
- Work with local women's organisations to advocate for women community liaison officers in police forces, who can assess women's security concerns and responses.
- Provide information and training to civil society organisations (CSOs) on the processes, structures and roles of the federal system and institutions, in order to strengthen their accountability role.
- The UN independent assessment should consult with security providers and communities at a national and federal level, and better align post-2021 international arrangements with federalisation.

To FMS and district administrations:

- Develop district-wide development frameworks to identify gaps (in resources, capacities and political buy-in) and set priorities in conjunction with community-based organisations, clan elders and district officials.
- District officials should coordinate with businesses and communities to identify and open up opportunities for investment from within and outside of the state.
- The Galmudug regional government should engage MPs and elder selection committees to ensure information on FMS policy development and parliamentary affairs is available to district administrations.
- The development of new district councils should be done systematically to ensure that some councils do not advance before others, which could lead to power asymmetry and disparity in allocation of resources.
- Work with elder selection committees in the first instance, as well as CSOs and MPs themselves, to develop accountability and oversight mechanisms for MPs.
- MPs should actively build relationships with constituents. This could include district-level meetings to share information with communities on parliamentary discussions and to receive their input.
- Develop coordination platforms between clan elders/committees and district-level administrative officials in support of the above recommendations.

## Inclusion

While there are efforts to expand the political arena to a wider set of groups, the primacy of clan structures in all areas of society necessitates careful navigation and a clear understanding of how changes in social norms take place. This includes assessing the risks civil society face in their own communities when attempting to broaden political participation. There should also be awareness of how efforts to secure FMS-level agreements between powerholders can reinforce structures that block the participation of excluded groups, or which undermine policies and efforts to broaden the political arena. Public awareness of federal processes and structures is essential for encouraging a culture of accountability. When considering different models of decentralisation (for example, devolution or federalisation), it is important to weigh up the likely consequences of each approach in a given context – particularly how some groups will be excluded from political processes and decision-making – and the likelihood of a surge in new or existing conflicts.

To international donors and organisations:

- Be clear about what sort of inclusion is being promoted by supporting decentralisation, asking questions about who needs to be included and why (recognising that in most fragile settings, this is likely to be driven by inter-ethnic/clan conflicts).
- Assess the likely trade-offs of prioritising one dimension of inclusion (for example, of clans) over others (for example, of women).
- Assess how a decentralisation process is aligned with or may undermine longer-term governance aspirations – for example, ‘one person, one vote’ elections.
- Support the establishment of cross-district women and youth dialogue platforms at the FMS level by identifying shared concerns.

To FMS and district administrations:

- Support sensitisation programmes to challenge the stigma faced by minority clans, including by attaining political buy-in, civil society backing, and engagement of elders and religious leaders.
- Develop local constituencies of support for district- and regional-level legislation against the discrimination of minority clans, and the enactment of laws that codify quotas for women’s political participation.
- Clarify the status of displaced populations that have lived in an area for extended periods.

To CSOs:

- Identify opportunities for cross-district civil society alliances to develop advocacy positions on common issues.
- Ensure the inclusion of minority clans in activities and support their leadership roles.
- Raise awareness of and share learning from advocacy efforts across districts, including lessons from the women’s shadow parliaments.
- Develop sensitisation programmes that seek to counter negative stereotypes of minority clans.
- Work with authorities, initially at the district level, and clan elder committees on enhancing the accountability of officials and MPs, and to strengthen relations between authorities and community-based organisations, including on how authorities can better respond to and incorporate concerns of civil society into decision-making.

### Consensus building

Consensus building characterises the federal project, but requires frequent interventions from international donors and organisations to manage, resource and support. Tensions have increased between factions within FMSs and the FGS, as powerholders vie for the benefits that accrue from federalism: control of regional governments, municipalities, well-positioned ministries, seaports and airports, and external resources are all objects of fierce intra- and inter-clan elite competition.<sup>6</sup> If support for consensus building is to continue, it should align with and support – rather than undermine – long-term development and governance goals, while also enabling a range of Somali state and non-state actors to support dialogue processes.

To international donors and organisations:

- Invest in both ‘hardware’ and ‘software’: support ‘hard’ infrastructure projects that promote ‘soft’ engagement and dialogue between political elites around common benefits and interests – for example, roads that span FMSs.
- Cooperate with other donors to develop coherent and shared aims – both short and long term – across external efforts to support dialogue processes, that go beyond simply bringing powerholders to the table.
- Re-orientate efforts and priorities to support FGS-FMS consensus building in order to secure federalism – as so far, attention has been on relations within FMSs to strengthen the federal project.
- To support the building of a workable model of federalism, draw from experiences elsewhere in the country where elders’ councils have helped to resolve issues as they occur.
- Identify early warning mechanisms to prevent security forces being drawn into clashes between political factions, including confidence-building measures between FGS and FMS security forces.
- Identify and involve non-political elite constituencies in consensus-building efforts, such as CSO members, elders, women, or business leaders who have influence and expertise in facilitating dialogue in specific localities.

### Supporting clarity

The federal project has been mired in ambiguity – while this was initially useful in allowing clans to develop a ‘grounded’ approach to state formation and power-sharing, there are now questions over the sustainability of such an approach as it risks perpetuating tensions and can require constant negotiation on key political areas. Tensions between the FGS and FMSs have hampered administrative processes and the operation of bodies that clarify roles, disputes and mandates.

To international donors and organisations:

- Support the mapping of existing policies and bodies – for example, Election and Boundaries Commissions – that have roles in clarifying federal procedures, and work with the FGS and FMSs to identify ways to ensure their mandates are implemented.
- Support oversight mechanisms at the FMS parliamentary and district levels on fiscal allocation, which include representation from elder selection committees and CSOs.

To the FGS and FMSs:

- Prioritise a timetable for the completion of the constitutional review and amendment, with clear milestones and stated opportunities for FMSs’ involvement. This should ensure that clauses and amendments are clearer on the roles of and between FMSs and the FGS, as well as the roles of independent constitutional commissions.
- FMSs should work with the FGS (and vice versa) to clarify the scope and processes for agreeing FMS interactions with neighbouring states; for example, on shared border issues and cross-border security cooperation.
- Identify obstacles to negotiations on consolidating revenue sharing and fiscal allocation rules – between FMSs and the FGS, and within the FGS.

To CSOs:

- CSOs and community-based organisations should undertake community outreach and education on the processes, structures and roles of the federal system and institutions.
- Frame existing initiatives related to democratic processes and security and justice in terms of federalisation, to support greater public discussion on effective implementation of federalism at national and sub-national levels.

## Notes

- 1 For Somalia, this type of election would be the first by universal suffrage since 1969. Three elections in 2009, 2012 and 2017 were decided in a system in which parliamentarians were voted in by about 14,000 clan delegates.
- 2 At the date of publication, the national election commission is continuing with plans for parliamentary and presidential elections to take place in 2020/21. However, commentators have raised doubts about the feasibility of such a timeframe for 'one person, one vote' elections.
- 3 United Nations and World Bank (2018), *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington DC: World Bank).
- 4 ASWJ is a militia group that was formed in 1991 by Sunni Sufi Muslims. Operating mostly in Galmudug and the Hiraaan region of HirShabelle, ASWJ became an important anti-Shabaab actor and a loose ally of Somalia's transitional governments.
- 5 The 4.5 formula relates to the five main clan groupings in Somalia (the four major clan families – Darood, Hawiye, Dir and Digil-Mirifle – and 0.5 made up of all the minority clans), who select their own representatives to parliament.
- 6 Cheng C, Goodhand J, Meehan P (2018), 'Synthesis Paper: Securing and Sustaining Elite Bargains that Reduce Violent Conflict', Stabilisation Unit, April.

Electoral officials register a delegate during the electoral process to choose members of the Lower House of the federal parliament in Adaado on 29 November 2016.

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## 1

# Introduction

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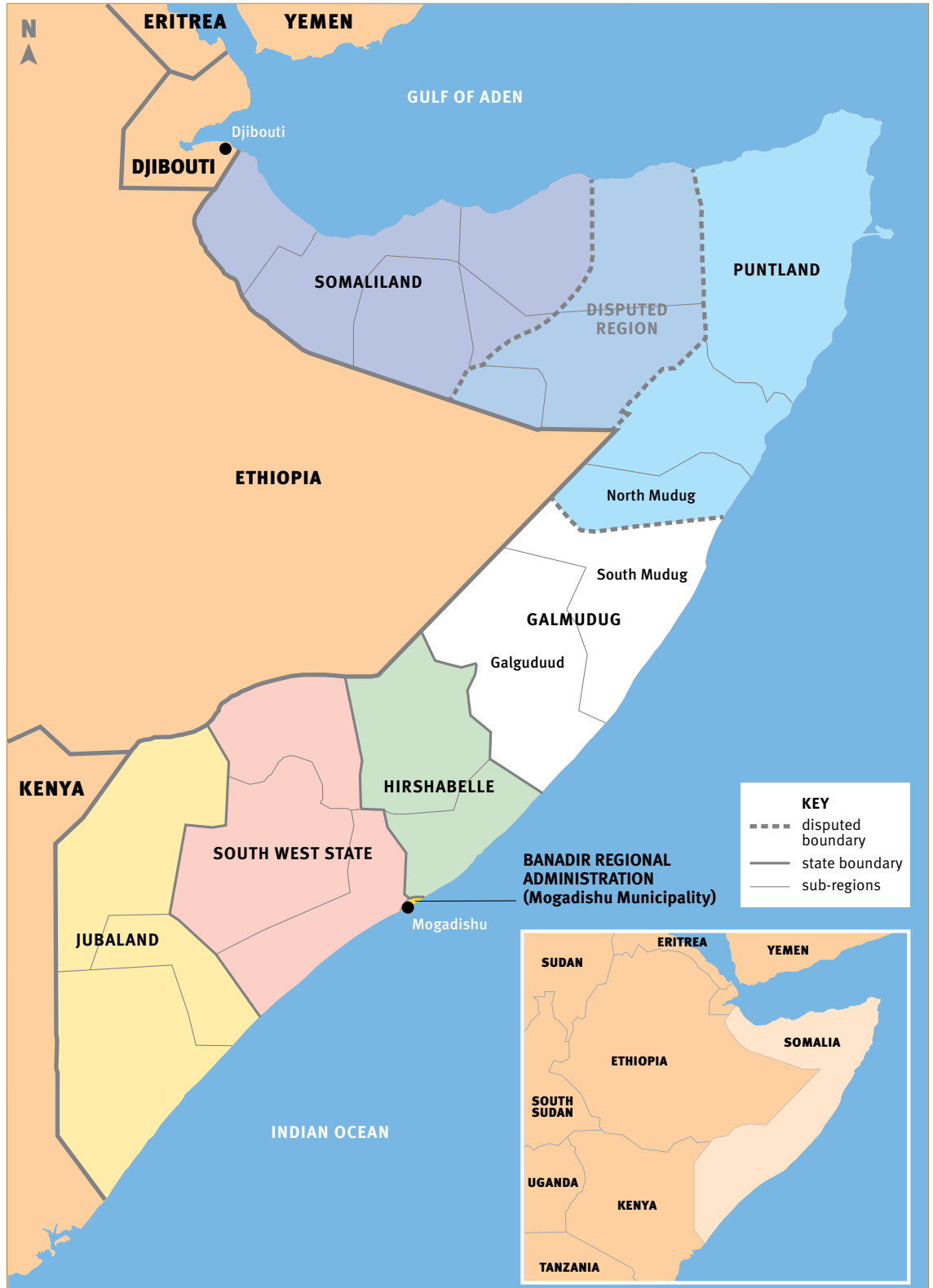
**The introduction of federalism in Somalia in 2004 was an effort to remedy the decades-long challenges the country has faced, exacerbated by the breakdown of the central state in the 1990s as competing powerholders violently contested an overly centralised (and authoritarian) state for political and territorial control. By devolving political and economic power away from the centre and towards smaller units of governance, federalism (and other forms of decentralisation) brings hope of political stability leading to greater security and development.**

A 2015 survey by the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies indicated that 68 per cent of Somalis were broadly supportive of a federal system of governance, which they expected to contribute to conflict resolution, power-sharing and regional autonomy.<sup>7</sup> Four years on from that survey, this report looks at how federalism is faring so far, through an exploration of Galmudug, one of Somalia's five federal member states (FMSs).<sup>8</sup>

In December 2019, voting took place in Galmudug state – the last of the country's FMSs to hold regional parliamentary elections. The elections in Galmudug were held after several months of political disruption and rising tensions between political factions within Galmudug and with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) – a glaring indication of the ongoing friction between the centre and the peripheries, as well as the internal disputes within Galmudug's political groupings.

The events of the last eight months are the latest chapter in Galmudug's federal state formation history, which began in 2006. Bordered by Somalia's Puntland and HirShabelle states to the north and south respectively, Ethiopia to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east, Galmudug has arguably had the most contested state formation process of all the Somali states. It is also the least advanced: it was certified as a formal FMS in 2015 but was only formalised as a unified administration in 2018. The (ongoing) state formation process is in many ways emblematic of the country's complicated federal project – which has sought to overcome the trappings of the previous centralised state, bring together contending clans (the dominant form of social organisation in the country),<sup>9</sup> distribute political power to each clan in mutually agreed ways, and reduce the opportunities and justifications for violence and conflict.

### The current Somali federal member states



The boundaries, colours, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply any judgement on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Data sources (data has been modified): UNOCHA, International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) and World Bank

## 1.1 Purpose of the report

Saferworld has been working in Somalia and Somaliland since 2004 to support civil society and community groups to identify conflict and security concerns, and influence decision-making processes and institutions on issues of peace, security and development, including election processes. We also conduct research and advocacy nationally and internationally to identify drivers of conflict within the Somali region, and inform our own as well as national and international strategies to address them. We currently have offices in Mogadishu and Hargeisa.

This study forms part of the wider multi-country Peace Research Partnership<sup>10</sup> and contributes to comparative research on how decentralisation processes in Kenya and Somalia have affected inclusion, service delivery and conflict dynamics.<sup>11</sup> The Somalia study also builds on previous research conducted by Saferworld and our partners in 2016 on Jubaland's experience of federalism.<sup>12</sup>

Galmudug's second election – the first took place in 2015 – is an opportune moment to reflect on how Somalia's federal project has fared so far. How do the assumed benefits of decentralisation play out in a context where clans are the dominant form of political, economic and social organisation, and the federal system has been (some might argue, unavoidably) arranged around them? Has federalism opened up avenues for political representation and inclusion, enabled a closer relationship between populations and political elites, and ultimately provided a conducive environment for peace and stability at a sub-national level? Galmudug's experience, which of course has its specificities and contextual complexities, also offers a lens on Somalia's overall political transition to a federal state and efforts to address deep-rooted conflict drivers. This is particularly relevant as national parliamentary elections are due to take place in 2020 amid discussions on moving towards a 'one person, one vote' system: the first in over half a century.

The study also opens up broader questions on the value of decentralisation models in conflict-affected and fragile states, and international support for them. State formation in Somalia, and Galmudug in particular, has in recent years been a primary focus for the international community. In 2016, the multi-donor Somalia Stability Fund<sup>13</sup> (SSF) supported negotiations between the Galmudug government and Ahlu Sunnah Wal'Jamaa (ASWJ), a Sufi armed

group that fought against al-Shabaab. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations (UN) Assistance Mission to Somalia (UNISOM) have played multiple roles, including facilitating negotiation between FMSs and overseeing ceasefire implementation between Puntland and Galmudug. Understanding how international interventions in support of federalism interact with the particular dynamics of Somali political culture generates lessons on how to adapt models of decentralisation.

The report begins with contextualising federalism as a conflict-resolution mechanism – generally and in Somalia. In the course of the research that this study is based on, it became evident that there is little documentation of the Galmudug state formation process. The report therefore maps how the Galmudug state was developed and negotiated – and by whom – and what the different phases involved. We then look at the impact federalism has had for people so far, especially in terms of security, community interaction and delivery of services. As a key objective of federalism is to broaden participation and accountability, the study also looks at the opportunities for different groups to participate in new political institutions and processes, and the influence they have. Specifically, the report charts the process for electing parliamentarians and officials, and the extent to which particular groups – minority clans, internally displaced persons (IDPs), women and young people – are part of the state formation process.

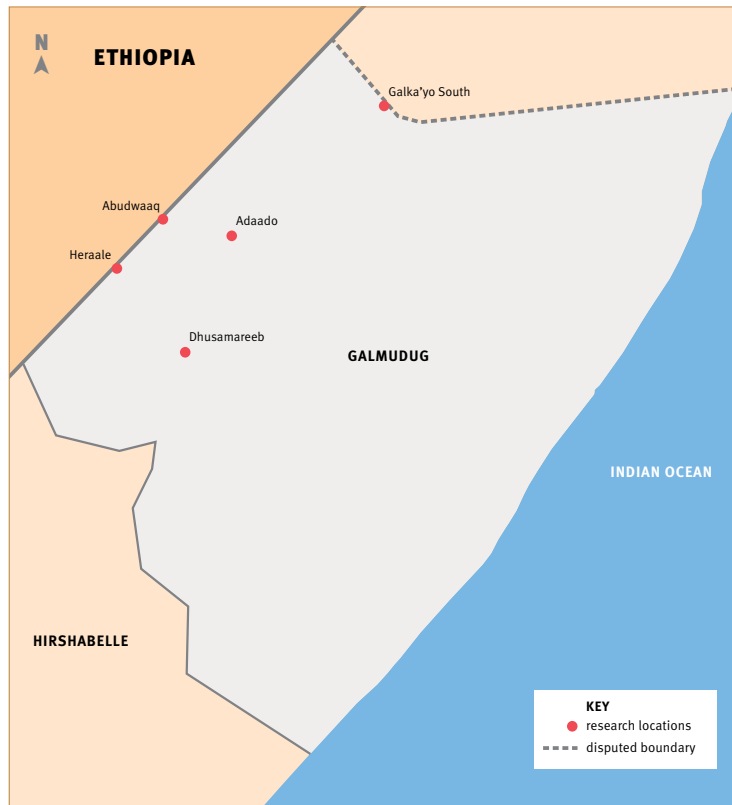
## 1.2 Research methodology

### Research location

This report is based on primary research conducted in Galmudug state and Mogadishu from January to November 2019. It was accompanied by a literature review on the application of decentralisation in conflict-affected states and on Somalia's experience of federalism to date. Research was conducted in five locations: Adaado, Dhusamareeb, Abudwaaq, Galka'yo South and Heraale towns. Further information on research design and methodology, including choice of research location, sampling, security and risk mitigation, and methods can be found in annex 1.



## Research locations



The boundaries, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

**Data sources (data has been modified): UNOCHA and International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)**

## Sample size

The primary research consisted of focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The 200 participants included staff from international donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), administration officials, clan elders, parliamentarians, IDPs, women and youth groups, and religious and business individuals from both the dominant and minority clans (including men, women, boys and girls). Women-only focus group discussions were carried out in each location, and overall there were approximately 40 per cent women and 60 per cent men respondents. With Galmudug's population estimated at 1.5 million, the sample size of 200 is small. Conducting fieldwork in Somalia is considerably challenging, with huge security and ethical risks for participants and researchers. Galmudug is especially complicated given that the executive and parliament are divided between Dhusamareeb and Adaado towns, and there are recurring tensions in divided Galka'yo. To ensure a representative sample across the different districts, care was taken to ensure that different social groups took part and that the sampling approach was uniform in all the sites.

## Limitations

The methodology involved identifying 'units' to gather opinions on and experiences of inclusion. This included an initial scoping of which groups in society have been most readily excluded from political representation, and the channels through which this usually happens. While this includes people with disabilities and ethnic and Muslim minority groups,<sup>17</sup> the study focused primarily on women, young people, minority clans and IDPs. There were other important limitations in the data collection. Some areas of Galmudug are controlled by al-Shabaab and are too risky to access – these appear to be southern areas of Galmudug, including Eelbuur, Eeldheer and Haradheere (see map of Galmudug districts on page 32), though this is difficult to confirm officially. Security is also more unpredictable in rural areas. The research team therefore focused on specific urban and peri-urban areas of Galmudug.<sup>18</sup>

The research also did not yield much disaggregated data on women's security concerns. In consultation with local NGOs, it was determined that a short fieldwork period was not sufficient to probe issues in an ethically sound way, which would require specific preparation – for example, referral options in case information pertaining to gender-based or domestic violence was raised. An adapted research method, with repeat visits with the same participants over a longer period of time (rather than short focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews with participants who were largely previously unknown to the researchers) would have better provided for a safe and confidential environment for eliciting nuanced information. The research team was also acutely aware that other organisations have conducted research on women's security concerns and therefore this study, which focuses on political participation and civic activism, draws on other resources to strengthen its analysis.

## Galmudug – ‘the kings or kingmakers of Somalia’

The Galmudug region is significant for a number of reasons. Before it was officially known as Galmudug, it occupied a special place in Somalia. This is due partly to its geography: it sits in the middle of the country, sandwiched between Puntland and HirShabelle states, as well as Ethiopia and the Indian Ocean. As a consequence, it has become a fault line of major clan-family boundaries, including Somali clans across the border in Ethiopia. All political leaders of Somalia have either come from the region or had the support of its clans – both the current president and prime minister of Somalia hail from here. In Somalia folklore, Galmudug has always been known to be ‘difficult’ and it is not for nothing that Somalis often say that if Galmudug is ‘settled’, the whole country will stabilise. The people of Mudug (*Reer Mudug*) – located in the northern area of Galmudug – are known for being ‘hard headed’.

Galmudug state has accommodated the armed group ASWJ into its political structure and has been considered a case study of success for the SSF.<sup>15</sup> After Mogadishu, it also has one of the highest concentrations of IDPs in the country, who initially fled from protracted clan conflicts in the south and later from areas controlled by al-Shabaab, also in the south. Some of these IDPs have lived in the region for over 20 years, but their different clan identities have meant they lack political and clan representation – raising important questions on inclusion.

The complexity of Galmudug’s state formation process is notable: a territorial dispute with Puntland led to a constitutional anomaly, with Galmudug being formed of 1.5 states – despite the provisional constitution stipulating that FMSs must be formed of at least two whole regions.<sup>16</sup> Despite Galmudug sometimes being seen as a ‘marginal’ region in terms of geography and resources, it has in fact considerable social, political and security significance for Somalia. It could also be argued that Galmudug has put federalism to the test in Somalia.

## Notes

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- 8 The other FMSs are Puntland, Jubaland, HirShabelle and South West.
- 9 Somali society is divided into four major clan families: the Darood, Hawiye, Dir and Digil-Mirifle. Each of these clan families is in turn sub-divided into dozens of clans and sub-clans. In addition, a portion of the population is identified as non-ethnically Somali (as Bantu, or one of a variety of coastal populations such as the Banadiri and Bajuni); they are referred to generically as ‘minority’ groups. The two most powerful clan families in Somalia are the Hawiye and Darood. Menkhaus K (2018), ‘Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Somalia Case Study’, Stabilisation Unit, February.
- 10 The Peace Research Partnership is a three-year project funded by UK Aid and implemented by a consortium of international NGOs (Saferworld, Conciliation Resources and International Alert). It examines how inclusion is affected by governance and by economic and peace processes, in order to inform more effective international support. See: <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/projects/peace-research-partnership>
- 11 The research on Kenya was published in 2018. Bennett W (2018), ‘Delivering on the promise of peace? Devolution, inclusion and local conflicts in Kenya’, Saferworld, August (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1182-delivering-on-the-promise-of-peace-devolution-inclusion-and-local-conflicts-in-kenya>)
- 12 Crouch J, Chevreau O (2015), ‘Forging Jubaland: Community perspectives on federalism, governance and reconciliation’, Saferworld, April (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1064-forging-jubaland-community-perspectives-on-federalism-governance-and-reconciliation>). The report explored how the FMS government of Jubaland is meeting the governance and reconciliation needs of its citizens.
- 13 For Somalia, such an election would be the first by universal suffrage since 1969. Three elections in 2009, 2012 and 2017 were decided in a system in which parliamentarians were voted in by about 14,000 clan delegates.
- 14 The donors to the fund are the UK Department for International Development, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the European Union. See: <http://stabilityfund.so/>
- 15 Laws E (2018), ‘Thinking and working politically in Somalia: a case study on the Somalia Stability Fund’, Overseas Development Institute, May (<https://www.odi.org/publications/11136-thinking-and-working-politically-somalia-case-study-somalia-stability-fund>). See also: UK Department for International Development (2016), ‘Somalia Stability Programme. Annual Review (3)’, June (<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203382/documents>)
- 16 Galka’yo city is in Mudug; however, clans in the north of Galka’yo affiliate with Puntland and those to the south affiliate with Mudug. A green line was established to divide the city, but over the years conflict has flared up on multiple occasions despite multiple efforts at mediation, including from NGOs.
- 17 While Somalia is considered to be ethnically and religiously homogenous, estimates indicate that minorities constitute one-third (approximately 2 million people) of the total Somalia population. These include Bantu, Bravenese, Rerhamar, Bajuni, Eyle, Galgala, Tumaal, Yibir and Gabooyo. See UNOCHA (2002), ‘A study on minorities in Somalia’, August.
- 18 While much of Somalia’s population lives in rural areas, according to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) data from 2014, the population of Galmudug is 44 per cent urban, 10 per cent rural, 31 per cent nomadic and 15 per cent IDPs (who reside in both rural and urban areas). UNFPA (2014), ‘Population Estimation Survey 2014 for the 18 pre-war regions of Somalia’, October (<https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf>)



The President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and the new president of Galmudug regional administration, Abdikarim Hussein Guled, receive an official salute on arrival at Adaado Airport for the presidential inauguration for the Galmudug regional administration in Adaado on 23 July 2015.

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# 2

## Federalism and conflicted states

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**States that experience social divisions have long resorted to decentralisation – the transfer of public functions and authority from central to intermediate and local governments – especially when competition over positions of power emerge and those excluded from power resort to violent contestation of the state.<sup>19,20</sup> Societies from Ethiopia to Belgium, Nigeria to Bosnia & Herzegovina, India to Kenya, have engaged in institutional reform to decentralise or devolve the power of the state. The resulting administrative units are subsequently given some powers and responsibilities over those who live there.**

### 2.1 Decentralisation as conflict resolution

Decentralisation, in theory, takes the sting out of national-level political contestation since social groups that may lose out at the national level can still exercise some power over their own devolved territories and institutions. It can also mitigate the root causes of conflict because communities are governed by authorities that are more proximate and therefore potentially more responsive, accountable and legitimate.<sup>21</sup> This should improve public services, mitigate social injustice and government abuse, and provide more responsive security and justice mechanisms to address social divisions and conflicts. For policymakers and advisers in international institutions, federalism has become a popular option for strengthening governance, with its assumed links to democratisation, competitive politics and a market economy.<sup>22</sup> The preference for an international system based on the nation state also favours decentralised models in states affected by conflict – as a way to prevent their disintegration and destabilisation, and the associated threat of insecurity and so-called disorder.

One of the most common forms of decentralisation is federalism, an arrangement under which power is constitutionally divided between central and devolved powers in all regions.<sup>23</sup> Roughly 25 countries are currently federal in some way – around 40 per cent of the world’s population.<sup>24</sup> This devolved layer of institutions normally features its own leaders and representative bodies, but also holds some decision-making power in the centre, often occupying a second body in the legislature.<sup>25</sup> While some forms of decentralisation, such as devolution, can in theory be reversed unilaterally by the central government – using common legislation for instance – a similar action for a federal state requires the consent of both the central and devolved authorities.

Ironically, it is in conflict-affected or post-conflict countries where decentralisation is most often needed but also most difficult to implement. In such contexts, decentralisation can be resisted by ruling elites when it threatens their power and wealth, or it can raise fears that it will strengthen rather than appease separatist claims. Discussions of federalism in Iraq, Yemen, Myanmar and the Philippines have resulted in fierce debate and stalemate over fundamental conflict issues ranging from borders, resource distribution and the rights of devolved authorities compared to the central state.<sup>26</sup> Federalism also requires considerable human and financial resources. After years of war, loss of life, displacement and infrastructural damage, the resources and expertise needed to resolve legal quandaries and political disputes, as well as set up effective devolved institutions to provide public services, are often lacking.<sup>27</sup>

### As a conflict resolution tool, decentralisation aims to:

- reduce the intensity of national-level political contests by granting certain regions or groups opportunities to hold power at the sub-national level
- allow different ethno-linguistic groups to make decisions reflecting their own customs and cultures
- enhance the participation of minority groups in politics and governance
- reduce inequalities between regions by providing for consistent fiscal transfers and allocation of resources from the centre to the sub-national level
- provide communities with authorities that are more proximate and accessible and therefore in theory more accountable and effective in terms of service provision

## 2.2 Federalism in Somalia

*“When does the federal system apply? It applies to communities who have differences in language, culture and religion. But people who have the same language, religion and culture cannot be federal. Federalism was meant for countries like Kenya and Ethiopia who have diverse people.”<sup>28</sup>*

The above quote illustrates some of the debate surrounding the applicability and suitability of federalism models for conflicted contexts, including Somalia. Decentralisation has historical precedent in post-independence Somalia, although to a lesser extent than its neighbours, Ethiopia and Kenya. The 1960 Constitution that set out political arrangements for the state of Somalia, merging the colonised territories of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia, insisted on a unitary political structure while advocating for the deconcentration<sup>29</sup> of administrative functions to local bodies ‘whenever possible’ (article 86).<sup>30</sup> The Siad Barre regime, which ruled from 1969–91, also instituted some means of deconcentration, establishing 18 administrative sub-divisions known as ‘revolutionary councils’.<sup>31</sup> Once the Barre regime fell in 1991 and the country descended into civil war, it was clear for most Somalis that the return of a centralised state was neither likely nor desirable.<sup>32</sup>

By this point, political authority and power in the country was already deeply fragmented. Since then, armed groups, warlords, clans, court systems, international forces, communal militias and regional administrations have all competed for territory alongside and against successive central governments.<sup>33</sup> These internal drivers combined with external forces in support of decentralisation. Among them were neighbouring states Ethiopia and Kenya, which were in favour of such a process in the hope that it would weaken both the central government of Somalia and Somali irredentism, while protecting their political influence and trade interests in the regions.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the wider international community also advocated for decentralisation in Somalia on the basis of ‘good governance’, implying that it would improve the efficiency of public services and enhance political participation.<sup>35</sup> As early as the late 1990s, international analysts were advocating for the reconfiguration of external support to Somalia, shifting attention from building a central state to supporting ‘building blocks’ and local pockets of relative stability and order in Somalia.<sup>36</sup> Since then, both the US and the European Union have adopted a ‘dual-track’ policy, providing capacity building both to the central government and to other sub-national forms of governance where they exist.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.2.1 Building the federal state

Although federalism in Somalia was agreed in principle during the 2002–2004 IGAD-led Somalia National Reconciliation Conference (also known as the ‘Mbagathi process’), it only began to take form after the 2012 Provisional Constitution was agreed. This enshrined federalism as the future of Somali governance and stipulated the formation of the FGS.<sup>38</sup> It foresaw the decentralisation of powers to FMSs (comprised of a FMS government and parliament) while encouraging cooperation, in the hope of harmonising power and institutional balance between the centre and the periphery. This system largely relies on consensus building between leaders at all levels of government (article 51 of the 2012 Provisional Constitution).

The 2012 Provisional Constitution mandates that two or more (pre-1991) regions can join voluntarily to form a federal state, while also suggesting that the number and boundaries of the FMSs shall be determined by the House of the People (the Lower House of the Federal Parliament) (article 49). It calls for the formation of a Boundaries and Federation Commission, an independent body tasked with assessing the legality and viability of new states before certifying them.

In reality, federalism in Somalia has evolved in a more ad hoc way as *de facto* political authorities already existed in Puntland and Jubaland. In the face of these political realities, constitutional processes concerning Puntland and Jubaland’s formation have been largely bypassed. Puntland formed its own independent political authority in 1998. It always foresaw the eventual establishment of a Somali federal state, and its dealings with the FGS have set precedents for strong, politically independent FMSs with independent relations with donors and external trade partners.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the formation of Jubaland as a semi-autonomous region began prior to the formalisation of a federalisation agenda in Somalia. An initial attempt to form a state named ‘Azania’ in 2011 was met with some resistance, and after a number of stalled attempts, negotiation efforts and external involvement from Ethiopia and IGAD over a three-year period, an interim Jubaland Administration was created in 2013.<sup>40</sup>

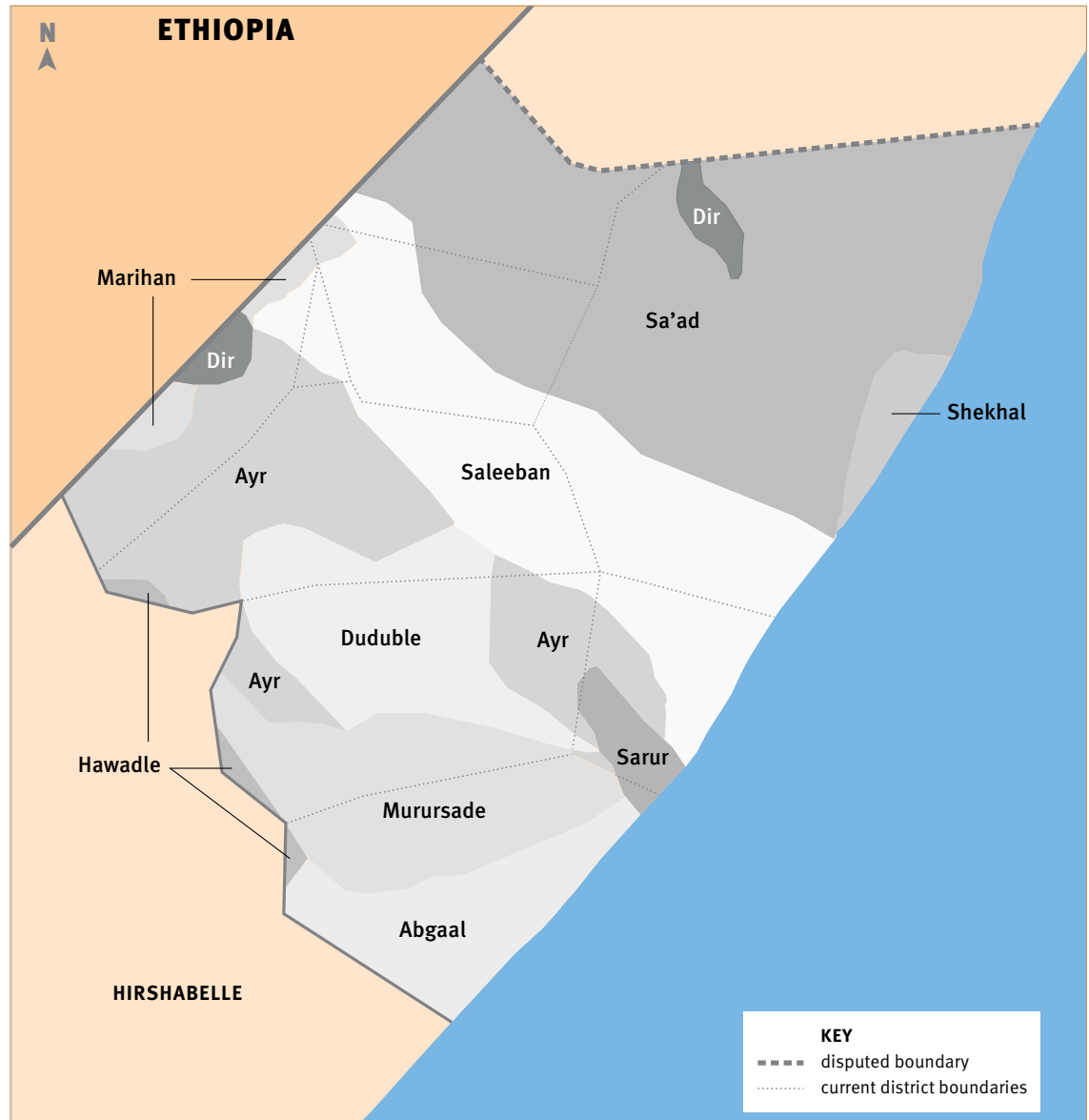
The formation of central Somalia’s two FMSs has proved more difficult. The first to form was HirShabelle state, consisting of the Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions. Disputes between the dominant clans, Abgaal and Hawadle, saw pressure from donors, the FGS and IGAD to resolve differences and, with support from the multi-donor SSF, a settlement was reached in 2016, with clans agreeing to share key positions (president and speaker of the assembly) and the location of the capital between dominant clans. Different degrees of resistance to the deal have emerged since, with dissatisfied Hawadle leaders continuing to push for a Hiraan FMS amid dissatisfaction with perceived FGS interference.<sup>41</sup>

### 2.2.2 Galmudug’s state formation

The story of Galmudug’s state formation is similar, involving protracted negotiations between clans and power-sharing agreements, as well as continuing tensions after the state was officially formed. Uniquely, Galmudug has accommodated ASWJ, a non-state armed group that had initially refused to recognise a Galmudug state, into its political structure. The regional state as it is currently was developed in two phases:

- i. 2014–2016: negotiations take place in Adaado between 11 clans to form an administration.
- ii. 2016–2018: negotiations take place between the President of Galmudug state and, firstly, with the Puntland government to delineate common state boundaries, and secondly with ASWJ to bring them into the administration.

## Galmudug clan distribution



The areas of influence described in this map should not be confused with areas of control. Areas of influence do not have by nature clear boundaries. Administrative boundaries for the districts of Balamballe and Galhareeri are not displayed on this map due to missing or unavailable data. As such, this map does not represent any endorsement of boundaries of any political administrations or clan areas.

Data sources (data has been modified): UNOCHA and International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)

### Phase 1: 2014–16

An initial Galmudug state was formed in 2006. Forged from parts of Galguduud and south Mudug, it took south Galka'yo as its capital (as northern Mudug had been claimed in the formation of Puntland federal state in 1998, with north Galka'yo as its capital). The administration had limited reach, and the development of Somalia's provisional constitution in 2012 saw renewed momentum and efforts to unify different areas as a 'Central Regions State'. In 2014, regional representatives and the FGS signed an agreement to formalise the administration, supported by a technical committee to prepare a roadmap and facilitate the process of creating an interim administration.<sup>42</sup>

While the process encountered multiple challenges and disagreements – from the location of the state formation conference to defining the borders of the new administration – there was general buy-in from the major clans.<sup>43</sup> Negotiations in Adaado, known as the Adaado conference, brought together representatives from Galmudug's 11 main clans in April 2015, to agree a regional constitution and form an 89-member regional state parliament, which elected Abdikarim Guled, a close ally of the then President Hassan Sheikh, as regional president and Mohamed Hashi as vice president.<sup>44</sup> In July 2015, Galmudug state was formed, retaining Adaado as its provisional headquarters since the constitutional city, Dhusamareeb, was under the control of ASWJ, which had largely rejected the agreement.<sup>45</sup>

The creation of a new federal state was immediately contested by another FMS – Puntland – which believed that the constitution agreed in Adaado claimed the whole of Mudug region for Galmudug, including northern areas that Puntland had claimed in its own constitution. Puntland suspended relations with the FGS in protest, stating that the new state contravened agreements they had made the previous year to maintain Mudug as a region shared by Puntland (north Mudug) and Galmudug (south Mudug). Violence broke out between the forces of the two FMSs in late 2015: lasting a month, it left 20 people dead, 120 injured and over 90,000 displaced.<sup>46</sup> It would take several months and a change of president for the disagreement to be resolved.

### Phase 2: 2016–18

The second phase of the process saw further consolidation of Galmudug state. ‘Elections’ for the Somali Federal Parliament, the first since 1984, were held in 2016: Galmudug elected 36 Members of Parliament (MPs) to the Lower House (including nine women, making up 25 per cent of MPs) and eight Senators to the Upper House (two of whom were women). However, the next two years also brought continued conflict with Puntland over Galmudug’s boundaries, as well as threats to its internal security and political legitimacy from ASWJ. The political context shifted with the resignation of Galmudug’s president, Guled, in mid-2017, barely two years into his four-year term. His replacement, President Ahmed Du’ale (also known as Xaaf),<sup>47</sup> successfully negotiated an agreement with Puntland in that same year to split the city of Galka’yo, and formalise the boundaries of northern and southern Mudug between the two states.

The change in president also had a major impact on relations with ASWJ. ASWJ maintained that its role as the sole bulwark against al-Shabaab in central Somalia and the sacrifices made by its forces had not been adequately recognised, nor its political demands taken seriously. The group insisted on keeping its armed wing, ostensibly to rebuff al-Shabaab, and demanded significant political powers. President Guled, who was close to the FGS President Hassan Sheikh, was unwilling to cede such substantial power or political recognition to ASWJ and was consequently unable to bring the group into his administration.<sup>48,49</sup> Without the same ties to the FGS, his replacement, President Xaaf, immediately made concerted efforts to reach out to ASWJ. Months of negotiations ensued and, supported by international partners including the SSF, IGAD and the Djibouti government, the two sides agreed to the Djibouti Agreement in January 2018. Under it, ASWJ agreed to join President Xaaf’s administration – merging its parliament with Galmudug’s and

## Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a (ASWJ)

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a is a militia group that was formed in 1991 by Sunni Sufi Muslims to oppose jihadist groups that arose before al-Shabaab existed. Operating mostly in Galmudug and the Hiraan region of HirShabelle, ASWJ became an important anti-Shabaab actor and loose ally of Somalia’s transitional governments. By 2017 it was estimated to have at least 5,000 fighters. It has engaged in some of the fiercest fighting with al-Shabaab, and has managed to hold areas liberated from them. As a result, its areas of operation in Galmudug are some of the only areas in Somalia, apart from Puntland and Somaliland, where unfettered travel on roads is possible for 200–300 kilometres.

For many years, ASWJ enjoyed close support from Ethiopia, and Mogadishu viewed the group and its foreign sponsor as sowing political discord in Somalia advantageous to Ethiopia. The group’s battlefield success rapidly translated into political ambition, and it transformed from a religious-clan militia into a potent political actor. However, accusations of human rights abuses levelled against ASWJ include random shootings of civilians and extrajudicial killings.<sup>50</sup>

integrating its forces into Galmudug’s forces and the national army.<sup>51</sup> In exchange, ASWJ’s top leader, Sheikh Mohamed Shaakir, received a newly created post of chief minister, in which he could preside over cabinet meetings, but would not be able to appoint or sack ministers, which remained the duty of the Galmudug president. ASWJ were also given 89 seats in the Galmudug parliament – doubling its size and making it the largest group politically in the FMS.

The Djibouti agreement also stipulated that the Galmudug parliament sit in Adaado, the interim capital, with the government cabinet and officials based in Dhusamareeb, the state capital. President Xaaf moved from Adaado to Dhusamareeb, making Galmudug only the second state in the federation to operate from its official capital (after Puntland).<sup>52</sup> However, since then, Galmudug has essentially operated as a divided administration, geographically as well as politically; political factions have developed alliances with different central government institutions. Galmudug has also had two presidents in four years, and each has had a difficult relationship with his vice president and the speaker of the parliament – the two other senior elected officials in the state.





Clan elders listen to introductory speeches at HabarGidir Peace Conference, Hobylo, July 2019.  
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## 2.3 Federalism and inclusion in Somalia

Inclusion has become a key concept for international peacebuilding and development discourse and interventions. There is broad global consensus that inclusion matters in conflict-resolution processes. The 2018 UN and World Bank report, *Pathways for Peace*, asserts that ‘addressing inequalities and

exclusion’ and ‘making institutions more inclusive’ are key to preventing violent conflict.<sup>53</sup> The UN has defined ‘inclusivity’ as ‘the extent and manner in which the views and needs of parties to conflict and other stakeholders are represented, heard and integrated into a peace process’.

Inclusivity is a major preoccupation in Somali politics.<sup>54</sup> Yet inclusion and exclusion are often discussed in relation to whether enough members

of a particular clan, or the right clans, are present in politics (for example, in negotiations or allocation of

seats). The expression *looma dhamma* – ‘not inclusive’ – has been used to dismiss peace agreements and justify a continuation of conflict, and often results in the absence of certain individuals (clans) from the negotiating table.<sup>55</sup> The ‘4.5 formula’<sup>56</sup> has, since the Mbagathi Process, provided the basis for allocating seats in parliament, and is also used to assess the legitimacy of the cabinets that each government forms. This means that each of the five main clan groupings (the four major clan families – Darood, Hawiye, Dir and Digil-Mirifle – and one group made up of all the minority clans) selects their own representatives to parliament. For example, there has been tacit understanding that a Darood president selects a Hawiye prime minister and vice versa, while the Digil-Mirifle are accorded the position of speaker of the house. The remaining cabinet seats are allocated on the basis of careful clan calculations, which tend to lead to a bloated cabinet – FGS President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed’s first cabinet had 82 ministers.<sup>57</sup> It is therefore a misnomer to talk about ‘elections’ in the traditional sense in Somalia. Political positions at national, regional and district levels, including mayors, are chosen through a selection process predominantly determined by clan elders. Clan structures and related *Xeer* norms (the Somali customary system that informs social

“  
Political positions at national, regional and district levels, including mayors, are chosen through a selection process predominantly determined by clan elders.”

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relations between and within clans) are therefore integral in shaping who has access to political positions and economic resources under federalism.

Many Somalis also frame participation and representation around their clan, looking at whether clan members (elders) are part of negotiation processes and hold political office, or whether their clan's needs are being met. When respondents were asked if they felt represented in the new federal system, both men and women framed responses around 'we' – referring to their clan: "Yes, we have [a] Member of Parliament and ministers and our clan elders are part of the clan elders in the locality."<sup>58</sup> "We need our share when positions are distributed. We have representatives at district council and they are the ones that listen to our needs and work with us. They represent us well."<sup>59</sup>

This sense of identity linked to clans has fundamental implications for the understanding of, and approach to, inclusion in Somalia – in a conceptual but also a practical sense. As a vehicle for inclusion, federalism may be broadly judged by Somalis as 'inclusive enough' to reflect clan structures, and by international donors as 'embedding strong political economy incentives' and as 'ensuring the allocation of benefits, opportunities and resources (such as political positions, business prospects) is consistent with how power is distributed in society', therefore 'stabilising the elite bargain' and diminishing the prospects for escalations of violent conflict.<sup>60</sup>

While some respondents did mention obstacles to participation under the present system and expressed a desire to move towards 'one person, one vote' elections, opening up a conversation about broader inclusion – of women, young people, minority clans and IDPs – had to be approached judiciously. Bringing services, employment and education opportunities closer to populations is part of this, as is the opening up of political positions and civic space for advocacy. The introduction of federalism raised expectations of increased political representation for different groups, especially young people and women.<sup>61</sup> Progress has been mixed; for example, commitments made to women's quotas have not yet yielded adequate numbers of seats for women. At the national level, a 30 per cent quota for women's political participation was agreed in the 2016/17 election process for a new federal parliament, which has recently been incorporated into the 2020 Federal Election Law.<sup>62</sup> Yet concerns remain about how this will be implemented in practice and it remains a pressing issue for women Somali activists as preparations for national elections develop.<sup>63</sup> In practice, the actual number of women parliamentarians in the 2016/17 national election was 66, or 24 per cent of parliamentarians.

However, viewed over a 15-year period, women's direct political participation has gradually increased. In 2012, women received 14 per cent of parliamentary seats – an improvement from the 2000s, when women occupied approximately 8 per cent of seats.<sup>64</sup> Understanding how federalism enables particular groups to consolidate their political and social positions, in Galmudug and Somalia more broadly, helps to identify points of flexibility in the system, as well as to assess future prospects for sustainable peace and security for all Somalis.

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- 56 The 4.5 formula relates to the five main clan groupings in Somalia (the four major clan families – Darood, Hawiye, Dir and Digil-Mirifle – and 0.5 made up of all the minority clans), who select their own representatives to parliament.
- 57 Menkhaus K (2018), 'Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Somalia Case Study', Stabilisation Unit, February.
- 58 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Heraale, April 2019.
- 59 Saferworld focus group discussion, women in Abudwaaq, April 2019.

- 60 Recent policy debates have shifted focus from broader societal inclusion to ensuring those who have the power to disrupt political agreements are incentivised to sign up to and remain committed to power-sharing arrangements. See: World Bank (2011), 'Conflict, Security, and Development', World Development Report (<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389>); Cheng C, Goodhand J, Meehan P (2018), 'Synthesis Paper: Securing and Sustaining Elite Bargains that Reduce Violent Conflict', Stabilisation Unit, April; Stabilisation Unit (2019), 'The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation: A guide for policy makers and practitioners', March ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/784001/The\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_Approach\\_to\\_Stabilisation\\_A\\_guide\\_for\\_policy\\_makers\\_and\\_practitioners.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784001/The_UK_Government_s_Approach_to_Stabilisation_A_guide_for_policy_makers_and_practitioners.pdf))
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Members of the Galmudug Assembly attend a capacity-building workshop held in Mogadishu in November 2015. The workshop was supported by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

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# 3

## Building Galmudug state: negotiating political power and institutions

**The formation of Galmudug state has been characterised on the one hand by negotiation and dialogue to build consensus (mainly between clans) and accommodate powerholders, and on the other hand by internal and external contestation over boundaries, powers and mandates. Neutral adjudication has been ad hoc and often focused on short-term goals of deal-making, while efforts to broaden political participation have stumbled due to the prevalence of customary structures.**

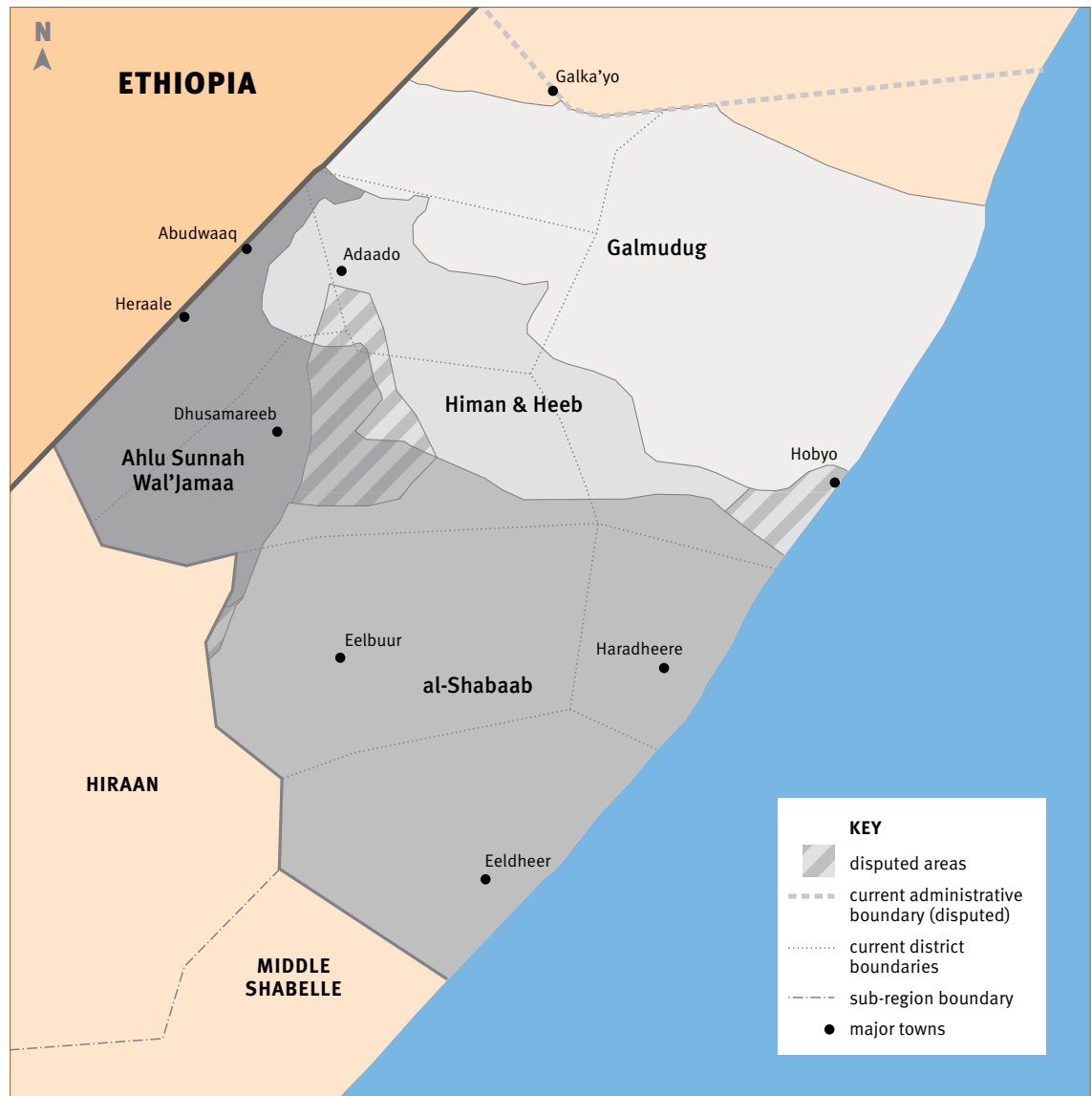
### 3.1 Consensus building

Before the provisional Somali constitution was agreed in 2012, the area that is now Galmudug state was mostly made up of separate city states run by sub-clans and various armed groups. Like many other areas of Somalia, piracy networks and illicit activities such as drug and arms trades were commonplace, as were pockets of informal and functioning governance. The impetus to repel external threats led to a series of small- and large-scale clan negotiations that characterised the journey towards the creation of Galmudug, the FMS.

An initial 2006 Galmudug administration was formed by leaders of the Sa'ad sub-clan (part of the broader HabarGidir clan),<sup>65</sup> after the rise of the Islamic Courts Union in the early 2000s created a power vacuum as many Mogadishu-based powerholders were removed.<sup>66</sup> This Galmudug administration had limited reach, with parts of the territory already held by other clan-negotiated entities. These were:

- the Himan and Heeb administration – formed in 2008 by the Saleeban (another sub-clan of HabarGidir) – which had its headquarters in Adaado town, while also controlling parts of Hobyo and Haradheere<sup>67</sup>
- a central state created by the Marihan clan in 2011–12 in areas of south-west Galgaduud around the town of Abudwaaq, which was eventually taken over by ASWJ who were based in the city of Dhusamareeb

## Previous administrations and areas of influence – 2011



The areas of influence described in this map should not be confused with areas of control. Areas of influence do not have by nature clear boundaries. Administrative boundaries for the districts of Balamballe and Galhareeri are not displayed on this map due to missing or unavailable data. As such, this map does not represent any endorsement of boundaries of any political administrations or clan areas.

**Data sources (data has been modified): UNOCHA and International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)**

The Adaado conference of 2015, which led to the creation of the current Galmudug FMS, continued the processes of bargaining and consensus building. It was unprecedented for representatives from all the 11 clans living in southern Mudug and the Galgaduud region to come together, let alone to agree to form an administration of such scale and negotiate its power-sharing features. The major clans each had a clear mandate to decide the structure of the process and each claimed or were designated a specific function in the federal project.<sup>68</sup> The Saleeban clan of Himan and Heeb was asked by Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh to host the state formation process. Another prominent clan, the Sa'ad – who earlier led the initial Galmudug administration based in Galka'yo South – was given the right to choose the administration's name and the position

of president. Dhusamareeb, home to the Ayr sub-clan and the capital of the Galgaduud region, was made the official capital city. The role of speaker of parliament was given to the Murursade clan; first deputy was given to Dir; second deputy to Sarur; and the Marihan clan was given the post of deputy president.

Selection processes for political positions have followed a similar process of clan power-sharing. In the two elections to date – the first in 2016 and the second recently in early 2020 – clan power-sharing allocations were pre-agreed. The 2020 elections were preceded by months of tensions but also consensus-building forums: a HabarGidir clan reconciliation conference in Hobyo preceded a broader inter-clan meeting in the administrative capital, Dhusamareeb, hosted by the FGS.

For national-level positions, the selection system follows the consociational 4.5 formula.<sup>69</sup> Galmudug has 36 MPs in the Lower House and eight senators in the Upper House of the national parliament, with eight of the 11 clans given a seat in the senate (all but Shekhal, Surur and the 0.5 clans).<sup>70</sup> At the FMS level, local clan distribution determines seat allocations. For Galmudug, there are 11 clans involved in power-sharing arrangements: five HabarGidir sub-clans (Sa’ad, Saleeban, Saruur, Ayr and Duduble); Marihan; Dir; Abgaal (Wa’esle sub-clan); Murursade (of the wider Hawiye family clan); Shekhal; and several smaller clans collectively known as Beesha Shanaad (including the sub-clans of Madhibaan and Tumaal), which together equal one clan.<sup>71,72</sup>

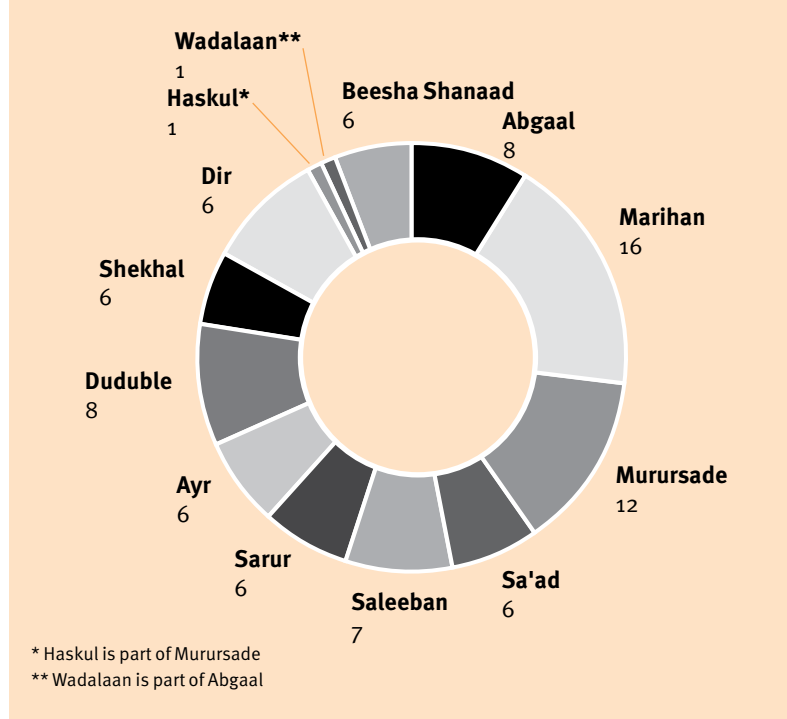
### 3.1.1 Contestation

The formation and consolidation of Galmudug has also been a story of contention – of coups and counter-coups featuring Mogadishu, the Galmudug administration in Dhusamareeb and the rival administration based in Adaado, as well as ASWJ. The introduction of a formal system of regional state government also changed the locus of negotiation and deal-making – relying on government-to-government (FGS–FMS and FMS–FMS) rather than inter-clan relations, and shifting from consensus building to the formation of alliances and divisions between factions within the FMS and the FGS. The incorporation of ASWJ, which has disavowed clan affiliations, also bucked the trend to date.

### 3.1.2 Incorporating a non-state armed group

The second phase of Galmudug’s state formation, primarily negotiated bilaterally between President Xaaf and ASWJ, diverged from the Adaado clan consensus-making process in 2015. This was not only the first time that a non-state armed group was brought into the political fold in Somalia, but the agreement also rebutted the constitutional measures (such as the 4.5 formula) for the allocation of political positions. ASWJ’s inclusion was disruptive for a number of reasons. It complicated clan power-sharing in Galmudug FMS by introducing 89 ASWJ parliamentarians, who were selected on the basis of their adherence and commitment to ASWJ ideology rather than their clan affiliation.<sup>73</sup> This points to some elasticity in the Somali political system, where ad hoc adjustments and concessions can be made to accommodate interests beyond those of the clans. ASWJ rejected the Adaado conference because it sought recognition to attend as a ‘political’ group rather than be broken down into its clan components, which it feared would decrease

**Fig. 1: Clan allocation for Galmudug parliamentary seats, 2016**



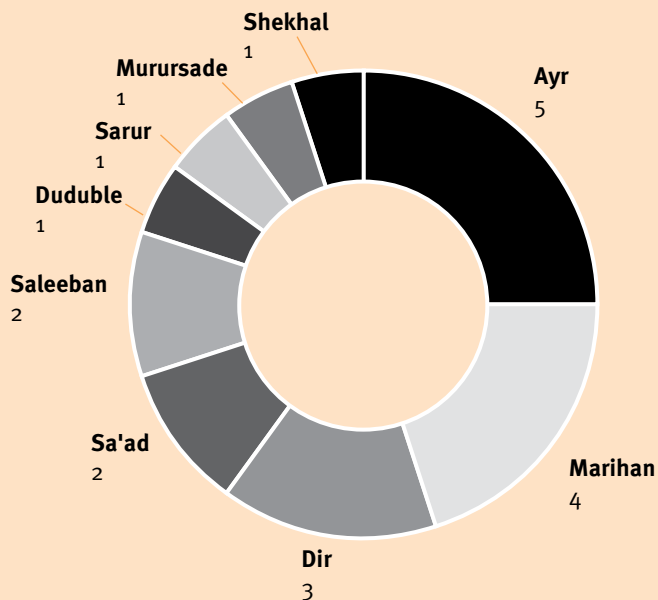
its influence. Many protested against what they saw as ASWJ’s unfair addition to some clans’ share of representatives (ASWJ members are from Ayr, Dir and Marihan clans). For example, the creation of the post of head of cabinet for ASWJ meant that both President Xaaf and the new chief minister, Sheikh Shaakir, hailed from the same clan. Their inclusion also reflected (and heightened) tensions between the Galmudug and federal government executives. President Xaaf and ASWJ’s relationship became a cog in the push-and-pull process between the centre and the periphery as they attempted to assert power against each other.

Overall, ASWJ’s power has largely been confined to Galmudug; the group was not given any seats in either house of the bicameral national parliament. While claiming to eschew clan affiliations, ASWJ’s power base has been gradually diluted by clan politics and disagreements since the Adaado conference. Its supporters from the Marihan clan were divided during the 2015 negotiations as some decided to join the state formation process. Dir also suffered in-fighting after ASWJ joined the administration, and Ayr’s support for the group was depleted by President Xaaf’s spousal links to the clan. By 2019, ASWJ had become a family-driven organisation.<sup>74</sup> The 2020 election process saw its parliamentary seats reduced to 20 and aligned with clan allocations – a product of its overall waning political and military influence in the face of FGS-FMS tensions.<sup>75</sup>



**Fig. 2: ASWJ's appointed MPs by clan in the 2020 elections**

It was agreed in 2020 that ASWJ would have 20 representatives in parliament – drawn from the existing clan allocations. For example, Dir's total representatives were eight – ASWJ selected three of these and the elders selected the remaining five.

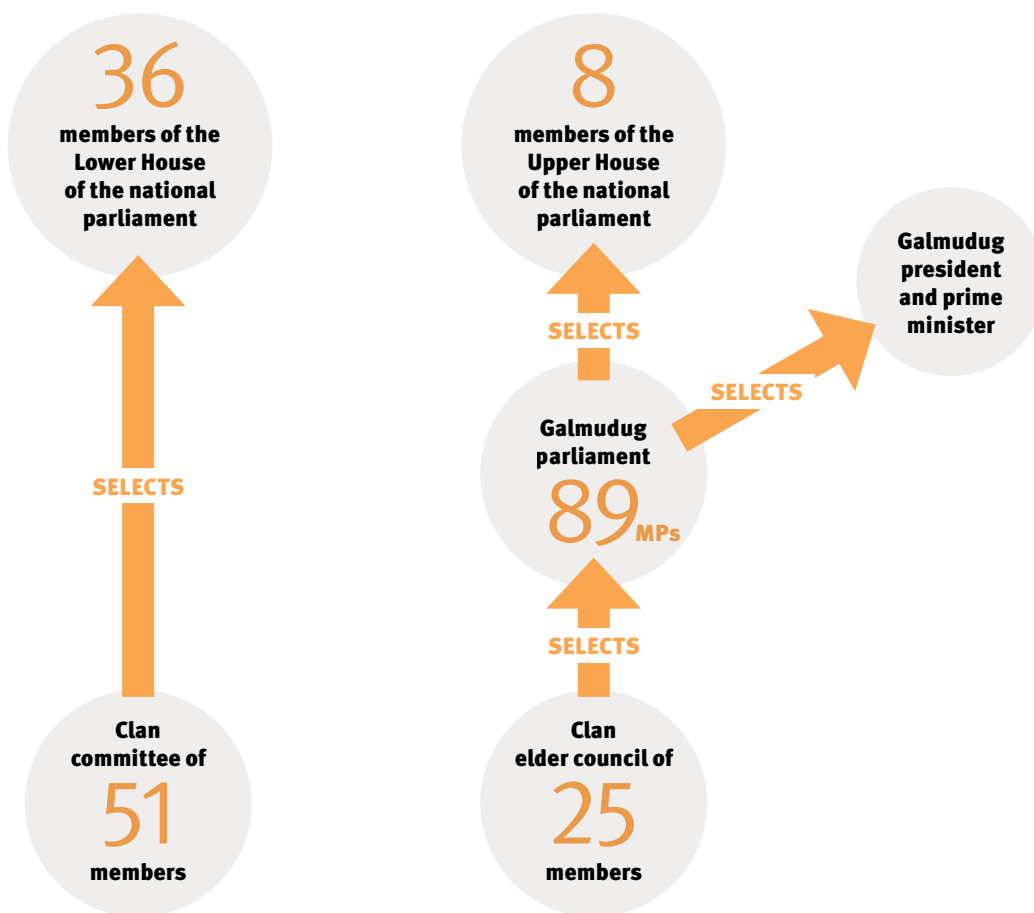


### 3.1.3 Political alliances at the national and sub-national level

Since its formation, Galmudug has effectively existed as an administration divided between geographic centres of power, Adaado and Dhusamareeb, with alliances that have been built, shifted and broken between different political factions in Galmudug and Mogadishu. While supported by the centre, Galmudug's first president, Guled, was unable to command support internally. In contrast, President Xaaf, through an alliance with ASWJ, was able to secure his position and the regional parliament in Dhusamareeb – albeit at the discomfort of Mogadishu.<sup>76</sup> Tensions between President Xaaf and his Vice President Hashi and Speaker Ali Asir (both based in Adaado) have in turn played out at the national level. For example, negotiations in May 2019 over the terms of an FGS-proposed revenue-sharing formula saw President Xaaf siding with other FMSs in support of suspending cooperation with the FGS, while Vice President Hashi and Speaker Asir (both aligned to the FGS) quickly criticised President Xaaf's decision. Accused of interference in internal regional affairs, the FGS is increasingly paralysed in such circumstances and unable to mediate these internal disputes.

The 2019/2020 election process further reflects the tensions the state formation process has navigated over the past five years. The last half of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 saw further disputes erupt between the FGS and President Xaaf over the election process. ASWJ – weakened by internal disputes and politically marginalised over disagreements with President Xaaf soon after ASWJ's administration was formed – was also drawn in. In an attempt to gain support, Somalia's current president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (known as 'Farmaajo'), sent his interior minister to negotiate with ASWJ and the regional prime minister, causing President Xaaf to flee Dhusamareeb. Tensions escalated into violence, with federal forces deployed to take control of the regional capital – ostensibly to 'secure' an election process. This also saw in-fighting between the national intelligence and security apparatus, which supported different factions of the Galmudug administration. Media reports and accounts from our research suggested that the federal government had one eye on upcoming national elections during the regional elections, and sought to ensure its allies were well-placed in all the new regional administrations. In Galmudug, election results saw a new president – Ahmed Abdi Kariye (Qoor-Qoor) – emerge, and after initially rejecting the result, President Xaaf returned to Dhusamareeb to recognise Qoor-Qoor's administration.<sup>77</sup>

State formation has therefore not come to an end with the creation of a regional parliament or indeed its expansion to include ASWJ. It is instead an ongoing process of negotiation and testing of relationships among Galmudug's various powerholders, and between regional political leaders and the FGS.

**Fig. 3: Galmudug's parliamentary selection**

## 3.2 Broadening political participation

A core part of consensus building has been to ensure federal processes around political power reflect clan power within society and at every level. While relative clan size and strength determine proportional representation at national and regional FMS parliamentary level, district councils reflect very localised demographics. For example, 80 per cent of Adaado district council members are from the dominant clan – the Salebaan.<sup>78</sup>

The selection process for political candidates is based on the clan structure: elders lead the clans in political negotiations, while a 25-member council of clan elders (the *Guurti*) selects representatives for the Galmudug parliament. Clan elders and a clan committee, comprising 51 members, choose MPs for

the national parliament.<sup>79</sup> The titled clan leader (who can be referred to as the *Ugaas*, *Imam* or *Wabar*) has the final say in the selection process, after consultation with all involved sub-clan elders, and can intervene directly to make a decision when there are disagreements: “his decision is final and not questioned”.<sup>80</sup> The president and vice president of the Galmudug government are chosen by the members of the same parliament. At the district level, the mayor is elected by district council representatives, who are selected by the *Guurti*.

One consistent characteristic of the elder selection process across Somalia is that women are excluded. Women cannot become elders and therefore cannot participate in the selection process for positions at the national level.<sup>81</sup> Minority clans such as Bantus, Banadiri, Gabooyo and Madhibaan are usually also excluded at different levels within the Somali clan governance system – they were, however, part of the Galmudug state formation negotiations, and there is a minority clan elder representative in Galmudug’s 25-member *Guurti*.<sup>82,83</sup>



Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a militias undergo registration during the launch of a process to integrate them into the Somali Security Forces in Dhusamareeb, Galmudug, on 4 July 2019.  
© AMISOM

In order to be considered as a candidate for either a district, regional or national position, a person will normally organise a meeting to present their interest to the community and clan elders. Once the relevant council or committee decides on a candidate, the clan elder presents the choice to the electoral commission in order for them to be nominated.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.2.1 Factors affecting selection

Overall, five criteria appear to determine parliamentary selection: wealth, influence, education, clan interests and 'fairness' – such as ensuring proportional clan representation – with "education and financial resources the fundamental determinants of political accessibility across Somalia".<sup>85</sup> The campaigns required to lobby elders are invariably costly and therefore favour wealthy candidates and members from prominent families. Other factors contributing to the 'merit' of candidates included their "ability to deliver services" and "work for the interests of the people"; for example, individuals who have a link with the government or current regime and "who are able to push forward the overall clan interest".<sup>86</sup> The ability to threaten rivals with violence was also not insignificant.

Wealth is important not only to fund a campaign but also to provide financial incentives to the selection committees, with elders pointing out that "initially you have to entice the elders and then convince him to nominate you to the position".<sup>87</sup> A priority for elders also appeared to be to ensure the 'fair' distribution of positions among sub-clans so that a position might be given "to a sub-clan that didn't previously have such a position".

The default is for political representatives to be older men proportionally drawn from particular major clans. Opportunities for young people, women and minority groups are linked to their roles and positions within the customary structure. The need for wealth and 'experience', such as the ability to have sway with elders, can be a barrier for young people and women in particular. The possibility for women and members of minority clans to be selected is low, but is increasing. Generally, respondents mentioned that there is better representation of women, minority clans and youth in district administrations – which consist of less powerful positions – than at the regional state level.<sup>88</sup>

### 3.2.2 Opportunities for political participation: youth

The term ‘youth’ is distinct in the Somali political context. Some respondents described it as anyone aged between 15 and 40 years old, while others defined it as someone without social responsibility – for example, dependents.<sup>89</sup> The differences in definition are challenging for analysis but respondents were comfortable using the word and there appeared to be a common understanding and usage. There were, however, differences of opinion on how much political representation young people have gained under the federal system. While some respondents believed they do not have much representation, especially in terms of MPs, others said that youth have “30 per cent of seats in parliaments at both national and FMS level”.<sup>90</sup> Respondents from a youth organisation even pointed to 70 per cent youth representation (of predominantly men and boys) at the FMS level. Further probing revealed that this was meant in a relative sense – in comparison to previous regimes where the majority of positions were held by clan elders or much older people (over 45).<sup>91</sup>

Young people can be “constrained in running for political office by a lack of resources. Politics is an expensive venture which youth cannot adequately engage in”.<sup>92</sup> It was suggested that young people do not have the ‘skills’ or insight to persuade or influence elders, but such opinion also reflects the difficulty for young people to access elders in a hierarchical clan structure and to gain their respect.

### 3.2.3 Opportunities for political participation: women

At the national level, Galmudug has two women senators out of eight (25 per cent), and nine women out of 36 in the Lower House (also 25 per cent). At the level of regional parliament, the target for representation of women in Galmudug was 20 per cent during the 2016 elections, with 17 per cent attained – even less after ASWJ joined the parliament.<sup>93</sup> This means that for the 2017–2020 Galmudug parliament, only eight seats were occupied by women (approximately 4.5 per cent of the ASWJ-inclusive parliament) – and current estimates are that in the most recent election process, only six seats were allocated to women. However, a woman was elected as first deputy speaker in the Galmudug parliament in the 2020 elections – the first time this has happened in Somali politics.<sup>94</sup>

#### Excerpt from an interview with a woman MP for Galmudug in the national parliament

*“Generally, it is not usual in Somali society to choose women as a clan representative in local or national forums. Nevertheless, there have been attitudinal changes happening in Somali society towards women. In many instances, the chances of women to gain a parliamentary seat or other positions are equal to those of men – provided they have similar capacities and effective campaigning strategies. Women from prominent families have better chances to be selected for parliament or the district administration. Women aspiring to be a member of parliament have to demonstrate particular characteristics such as being a good mother, being sensitive to the needs of others, good education, respect for religion and culture, and above all, resources”.*

For women, the application of customary and social norms is distinct in a highly patriarchal and hierarchal society. Women have specific roles within the clan which do not include leadership and decision-making on clan issues or within the public sphere: “the Somali culture does not allow women to get involved in politics and that is a challenge”.<sup>95</sup> So while women have long participated in inter-clan peace dialogue, working with elders as part of peace-related platforms, and were involved in preparing meeting venues and mediating between different clans behind the scenes of state formation processes in 2014–16, only men took part in the decision-making part of the process: women do not sit directly at the peace table when elders (men) from different clans negotiate.<sup>96</sup>

Women tend to be excluded entirely from customary governance structures in Somalia, and are severely constrained in the ways in which they can make demands on elders; often, their only means to do so is through their husbands, brothers or sons.<sup>97</sup> Women’s formal exclusion from clan discussions and decision-making structures is directly mirrored in the formal political system.<sup>98</sup> Women are unlikely to be involved in the selection council or committee (which is chosen by elders), making it less likely for potential women candidates to gain a nomination, even using methods that work for others. A campaign is also costly, and men generally have more access and control of wealth than women: “women have limited accessibility of financial resources and limited education”.<sup>99</sup> It is also less socially acceptable or is viewed as a weaker choice

“

If you present the name of a woman as a political contestant, you can be ridiculed and asked ‘do you not have a man in your clan?’

Elder research participant.

for a clan to elect a woman as a clan representative at higher political levels. “Elders do not select women to positions even if she offers money to them.”<sup>100</sup> Those clan members willing to support the nomination of a woman candidate risk backlash: “If you present the name of a woman as a political contestant, you can be ridiculed and asked ‘do you not have a man in your clan?’”<sup>101</sup>

”

The formalisation of clan-based power-sharing through the 4.5 formula has served to further institutionalise this exclusion. For example, women can be seen as ‘unreliable’ clan representatives in political office because of their dual affiliation to their father’s and husband’s clan and the potential for associated split loyalty.<sup>102</sup>

There was some discussion about the effect of Islamic religious doctrine on women’s political participation. This is a source of debate within the country itself – while some believe the two are incompatible, others see nothing in Islam that prohibits women from taking up political and public roles, and some distinguish between religious and cultural barriers, arguing that it is the latter that are more restrictive. In 2016, the Somali Religious Scholars Council came out in support of the 30 per cent quota for women’s representation in parliament, stating that Islam does not oppose participation of women in politics.<sup>103</sup> While a 30 per cent quota has been resisted by some elders, religious groups and men politicians as an imposition by the international community, there is vibrant and ongoing debate and activism by Somali women and other Somali civic activists in solidarity on an issue that is often overlooked.

### 3.2.4 Opportunities for political participation: minority clans

The 4.5 formula ensures that the main clan families enjoy equal representation, but does not guarantee that all clans and sub-clans within those clan families feel satisfied with their seats in parliament.<sup>104</sup> For minority clans the process of selection for political office is also complicated – particularly because for both minority clans and sub-clans with small populations in a specific location, the rules can be similar. According to *Xeer* principles, clans that are small in number in any geographic region, including minority clans but also sub-clans, join with bigger clans they have historical links with for protection and for the purposes of paying ‘blood compensation’ – a process called *Diya* payment. However, political representation for minority clans is formally independent of majority clans, as

guaranteed by the 4.5 principle. “The minority clans participate in political representation as an independent clan; but socially, like contribution for community welfare, they are part of major clans.”<sup>105</sup>

The definition of minority clans became more politically salient after the 1992 collapse of the state, and the institution of the 2012 Provisional Constitution and federalism. While *Xeer* and *Diya*-paying principles have long been in place, the introduction of the 4.5 principle provided political recognition of minority clans as equal stakeholders in politics. On the one hand, the state formation process was a “golden opportunity” for minority clans. “It was the first time in history that minority clans were given the choice to appoint their representatives.”<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, this has raised the stakes for claiming status as a minority clan, especially where some sub-clans with a substantial population in a specific location self-identify as a ‘minority’ – as part of the 0.5 within the 4.5 – and therefore wish to be considered for political office. As such, when the term ‘minority clan’ is used, it can be difficult to discern whether it refers to groups that are part of the official 0.5 political allocation or groups that self-identify as such because of their numerical size and clan and sub-clan dynamics.

Several respondents suggested that it is naive to talk about the political independence of smaller clans, as the interests of bigger clans or even of Mogadishu-based politicians can trump their choices for political representatives. This sentiment was shared in Adaado and Dhusamareeb in particular. Many respondents from recognised minority clans talked about the need for a ‘guarantor’ majority clan, mirroring the *Xeer-Diya* payment arrangements between smaller and bigger clans. For example, in Abudwaaq respondents suggested that a woman MP was selected by her clan members but the position “was initially given to their clan by the Sa’ad clan as their guarantors”.<sup>107</sup> In Adaado, this was made clearer: “We are not independent and therefore can be easily manipulated either directly or indirectly.”<sup>108</sup>

The factors affecting the level of independence of smaller clans are not clear-cut, although location and size appear to be key: if a minority group has a significant population in a specific location or district, then it is more likely to be able to claim a political position, although this can be reversed if there are large numbers of sub-clans present in the same area: “There are some locations dominated by specific clans. In this case, it is difficult for some minority clans to be given a share because of the contestation among the sub-clans of the major dominant clans.”<sup>109</sup>

Two other factors are the social ‘contribution’ that a smaller clan is considered to have made during periods of hardship – for example, drought or inter-clan conflicts – and the length of time that a group has resided in an area. As one elder from Adaado explained, “those who contribute to the community during periods of hardships will definitely have a right to benefit from what comes during good times... we look at three things: their population size, their input into the society, and the length of time they were residing in this area – according to that they got positions in the new federal institutions.”<sup>110</sup>

It is clear from these examples that smaller clans’ ability to select their own political candidates can be constrained by larger clans, with clear criteria for determining which smaller clans have political representation. This can change over time: for example, a minority clan MP in Adaado described a process of “*awal nasab, aakhir nasab*”: after becoming estranged from the dominant clan for violating clan customs, the minority clan was re-assimilated over time because of its size and contribution to the clan during inter-clan wars. As a result of this, this respondent was selected as Mayor and then MP for Adaado.

### 3.2.5 Internally displaced persons

For those who have been internally displaced, active social and political participation is complex and requires further analysis. Galmudug, like other Somali regions, has experienced civil war, inter-clan conflict, drought, and insecurity caused by conflicts between al-Shabaab and the state and with ASWJ. Where migration has taken place within Galmudug, respondents described how “people who lived in certain areas for decades have become minorities, and new clans migrated into these areas and have become the majority”.<sup>111</sup> This impacts who is able to claim political representation: one respondent stated that “during the Galmudug parliament elections, we were told our slot was given to a lady from a minority clan who is not from Galmudug state”. A candidate from outside Galmudug can take precedence over one who is internally displaced in the FMS, if they come from a clan that already lives in the area.<sup>112</sup>

However, the majority of IDPs in the Galmudug area are from the southern regions of Somalia. While they are accommodated in terms of security and livelihoods, they are not seen as political stakeholders since they are not from the local clans. ‘Citizenship’ in relation to FMSs is clan-based, not geographical – which means that IDPs can live and stay peacefully in an area but they will not be recognised as citizens of that FMS. As a result, given the relationship between political identity and

location, IDPs who move to an area where they do not have clan members or any historical clan link are unlikely to gain any political representatives at all.

The length of time IDPs have settled in an area also appears to be immaterial: “What we lack is acceptance that ‘outsiders’ can have political rights after a period of ten to 15 years, for example.”<sup>113</sup> Children born to those who have settled in an area cannot claim political rights if their clan identity does not align with the clan dynamics in the local area. Their ability to advocate for political representation is also low and determined by clan elders, and they have very little political, social, financial and – importantly – clan weight to influence elders or the administration. The IDP respondents shared expectations that the formation of a new administration might improve their political stake, and expressed their disappointment at the current situation. A group in Dhusamareeb asked the district administration if IDPs could be given a permanent settlement, but without success. “Yesterday and the day before, I went to the district administrator and other officials to ask them to give IDPs a permanent settlement. But they did not give us much attention and our efforts were futile.”<sup>114</sup> For many IDPs, a priority is of course to return home and for the Somalia government to secure these areas so they can do so.

“ IDPs who move to an area where they do not have clan members or any historical clan link are unlikely to gain any political representatives at all.

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### 3.3 Constructive ambiguity

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While the federal system is built on enduring clan structures and systems, it is also shrouded, arguably purposefully, in ambiguity.”

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While the federal system is built on enduring clan structures and systems, it is also shrouded, arguably purposefully, in ambiguity. The nature of federalism in Somalia – based on the 4.5 formula for allocating political positions and the constitutional power of two or more regions to come together to create a FMS – has both facilitated and necessitated ad hoc institution building. Clan negotiations at the local level therefore determine the nature and form of FMS institutions, rather than Mogadishu or international partners mandating the formation of FMSs, their boundaries and power-sharing arrangements. A particular Somali form of federalism is hinted at, based on institution building ‘from the ground up’: “When the country decided to adopt a federal form of governance, there was a need to build federal institutions at the village level going up rather than top down. This created the opportunity for people to come together and negotiate on positions so that they were not left out in the federalism wave.”<sup>115</sup>

Yet this constructive ambiguity, established in the legal and constitutional tools of federalism, is also one of the biggest stumbling blocks to the consolidation of state formation. It lends itself to or demands ongoing and protracted negotiation between powerholders on the rules and procedures of fiscal and political federalism. For example, while the constitution of the district administration states that the mayor can hold office for two terms, it is not clear how many terms members of the district council can be in office. This is also evident in Galmudug’s dispute with Puntland over their respective territorial boundaries – Puntland’s objections were based on the fact that Galmudug was composed only of Galgaduud and half of Mudug, and therefore did not technically fulfil the constitutional requirement that federal states be formed of two or more regions.

This is partly due to the ambiguity of constitutional arrangements in relation to FMSs, which set out how states should be formed but do not specify who adjudicates the process and how key issues should be decided – for example, boundaries, mandates, resources, exact powers, revenue sources and sharing of natural resources. While article 49(1) of

the 2012 Provisional Constitution tasks an independent Boundaries and Federation Commission to determine ‘the number and boundaries of Federal Member States’, article 49(6) allows two or more regions to merge to form a FMS and seemingly to determine their own boundaries and composition. Currently, there appears to be no official entity able to adjudicate disputes objectively. The Boundaries Commission has a mandate but no political power or support. Attempts by the FGS to resolve tensions between the two FMSs were deemed biased by the then Puntland president, Abdiweli Gas, who accused federal forces of providing military support to the Galmudug Interim Administration, as its then president, Guled – a former federal minister – was close to the FGS president.<sup>116</sup> While many attributed the success of state formation to bringing divided clans together, unifying the different existing administrations and reducing conflicts and tensions between them, they also agreed that the resulting federal state has been mired in “political confusion”, giving rise to new tensions.<sup>117</sup> As one respondent commented: “Initially we were shirtless [there was no system] but now we are wearing a shirt that does not have buttons [a system that is not fully functional].”<sup>118</sup>

There is also a lack of clarity on the different roles and responsibilities of the FGS and FMS government and parliaments. Particular tensions have arisen over the FGS’ redistribution and transfer of (or lack of) donor funds and military assistance. There are constitutional tools that could help clarify these issues: for example, the provisional constitution set out arrangements for ten independent commissions, including the Boundaries and Federation Commission and the National Independent Electoral Commission, which were tasked with advising and adjudicating on core governance issues, including consulting with the FMS on such issues. However, these bodies have either not been fully established or, where they have been, are not adequately resourced – or their roles are not given enough political weight in order to perform their function effectively.<sup>119</sup>

Some respondents laid responsibility at the door of FMS leaders, arguing that they were creating competition between the centre and the regions with the “current regional presidents behaving as if they are independent from the central government, and competing with the central government president”.<sup>120</sup> Others claimed that the central government has not done enough to ensure the smooth implementation of federalism, by failing to consult with FMS leaders or create an impartial committee to resolve disagreements between the FMS and the FGS; by interfering in the day-to-day running of the regional administration – for example, by restricting sources of income and fiscal transfers; and by failing to raise public awareness about the governance system, the constitution, applicable laws and how they function.

Members of the Galmudug General Assembly in a group photo after the opening of a capacity-building workshop held in Mogadishu, on 21 November 2015. The workshop was supported by AMISOM.  
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### 3.4 External support to state formation

International support has been a significant part of the state formation process in Galmudug – perhaps more so than in any other FMS. This includes conventional support to institutional development and capacity building – though only for sub-national rather than national structures – such as training and resourcing of security officials, support for public financial management systems and civil service development, and infrastructure investment projects. The SSF, AMISOM and IGAD, among others, have also supported consensus building and dialogue (including logistical and security provision) at key moments to push forward political agreements.<sup>121</sup> For example, as well as supporting the technical committee in preparation for the 2015 Adaado conference, the SSF provided tailored support to talks that brought ASWJ into the political fold.<sup>122</sup> International partners were vocal in their public and behind-the-scenes manoeuvring in support of clan reconciliation conferences in advance of the Galmudug state elections.

Such support has been critical in cases where the FGS is not seen as a neutral arbitrator in internal disputes. Respondents referred to the political immaturity of the FGS’ political elite, who welcome “support and guidance from international partners” but are, at the same time, relatively unaware of their specific role and impact.<sup>123</sup> While the SSF in particular has been praised for providing timely, flexible and politically informed interventions,<sup>124</sup> broader questions of conflict sensitivity, given the delicate balance between consensus building and contestation, are pertinent. Identifying and mitigating the negative ramifications of interventions in a timely way – in a context where disrupting the political status quo commonly leads to further contestation – could help to introduce broader confidence-building measures between a range of constituencies. For example, it could be argued that the significance of the Adaado conference in bringing together 11 clans was undermined by the exclusivity of the Djibouti talks between Xaaf and ASWJ, and subsequent divisions between Adaado and Dhusamareeb could have been readily predicted. Concentrating on ad hoc reactive efforts

“ Respondents referred to the political immaturity of the FGS’ political elite, who welcome “support and guidance from international partners” but are, at the same time, relatively unaware of their specific role and impact.

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that essentially seek to secure and maintain elite commitments may help advance the federal project, but risks overlooking the requirements for achieving sustainable peace.

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**Overall, international support to Galmudug and to the country is skewed by the primacy of a security agenda that prioritises counter-terrorism operations against al-Shabaab.**

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Overall, international support to Galmudug and to the country is skewed by the primacy of a security agenda that prioritises counter-terrorism operations against al-Shabaab. Reclaiming and holding territory from al-Shabaab has been an important role for FMS forces, including Galmudug's, and ensuring state security forces' capacity has been a key priority for financial and logistical support. A fuller assessment of how security arrangements are aligned with the process of federalisation, particularly at the level of FMSs, is urgently required.

## Notes

- 65 The term sub-clan and clan can be used interchangeably – while Somalia has four main clans, ‘sub-clans’ can be referred to as ‘clans’ if they constitute a large presence in a geographic area, or simply as shorthand for them.
- 66 In 2006, a variety of Islamist organisations, centred on a long-standing network of local Islamic or sharia courts in Mogadishu, came together under an umbrella organisation, popularly known in the Western media as the Islamic Courts Union. As the movement coalesced and seized control of Mogadishu, the Islamic Courts Union became an alternative to the internationally recognised, but internally disputed, Transitional Federal Government, then restricted to Baidoa. See: Barnes C, Hassan H (2007), ‘The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu’s Islamic Courts’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 (2), pp 151–160. Exploiting the power vacuum, al-Shabaab also found safe haven in the eastern part of what is now Galmudug, covering a vast area stretching from Harardheere on the east coast to the hinterlands of Elbur, an ancient city in central Somalia. See: Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2019), ‘The Galmudug Crisis: A Blueprint For Sustainable Settlement’, Policy Brief 19, 4 September (<http://www.heritageinstitute.org/the-galmudug-crisis-a-blueprint-for-sustainable-settlement/>)
- 67 By 2015, the Himan and Heeb administration had largely collapsed, with al-Shabaab capturing Harardheere.
- 68 Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2019), ‘The Galmudug Crisis: A Blueprint For Sustainable Settlement’, Policy Brief 19, September (<http://www.heritageinstitute.org/the-galmudug-crisis-a-blueprint-for-sustainable-settlement/>)
- 69 ‘Consociationalism’ is a form of institutional engineering which maintains that ethnic or inter-group tension can be resolved democratically by the creation of a permanent multi-group coalition government. See: Yakinthou C (2009), *Political Settlements in Divided Societies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), pp 10–34.
- 70 o.5 refers to the minority clans in the 4.5 clan powersharing formula. Puntland is allocated 11 senators while the other states (Galmudug, HirShabelle, Southwest and Jubaland) have eight senate seats.
- 71 This 11-clan arrangement is highly controversial in the state, as some of the clans are opposed to it. These clans believe that the arrangement serves the interests of a few powerful clans. Sheikh AK, Galvanek JB, Grimm P (2019), ‘Conflict Assessment, Galmudug State. An Analysis of Local Perspectives’, Berghof Foundation ([https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Papers/2019\\_Report\\_Somalia\\_Galmudug\\_EN.pdf](https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Papers/2019_Report_Somalia_Galmudug_EN.pdf))
- 72 During the first phase of the state-formation process, the total number of parliamentarians was agreed at 89. For the second phase, this was reduced to 69.
- 73 The group was initially given 89 seats which some of their supporters disputed, until 106 were finally allocated to them.
- 74 Interview with adviser to international donor, March 2020.
- 75 The FGS further deployed the Somali National Forces to Dhusamareeb in February 2020, asserting its monopoly over the use of force in the region, and weakening ASWJ in the process.
- 76 Interview with adviser to international donor, March 2020.
- 77 *Shabelle Media Network* (2020), ‘Somalia: The Remaining Galmudug MPs to Be Announced Amid Dispute’, 5 January (<https://allafrica.com/stories/202001060281.html>)
- 78 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Adaado, April 2019.
- 79 As president of the FGS, Hassan Sheikh started a new system where a committee of 51 people selected the political representatives. This is made up of mostly clan leaders, but includes a number of other influential community figures such as religious leaders, women and business people.
- 80 Saferworld interview with elder in Heraale, February 2020.
- 81 McCullough A, Saed M (2017), ‘Gatekeepers, elders and accountability in Somalia’, Overseas Development Institute, December (<https://www.odi.org/publications/10996-gatekeepers-elders-and-accountability-somalia>)
- 82 Ibid. Since the collapse of the state in 1991, however, some ambitious members of minority clans have begun self-inaugurating themselves as clan elders. This has led to a proliferation of the numbers of elders and clan leaders, and to tensions between those chosen by members of majority clans and those who have self-inaugurated. See also: Bradbury M, Catholic Institute for International Relations (2008), *Becoming Somaliland* (London: Progressio).
- 83 Saferworld interview with woman national MP for Galmudug, February 2020.
- 84 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Adaado, April 2019.
- 85 Saferworld interview with woman national MP for Galmudug, February 2020.
- 86 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Adaado, April 2019.
- 87 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 For instance, if someone is 30 years old and married with children then they will not be considered a youth but an elder.
- 90 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 91 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Adaado, April 2019.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Human Rights Council (2016), ‘Human Rights Council Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, A/HRC/33/64’, 15 September.
- 94 Saferworld interview with woman national MP for Galmudug, February 2020.
- 95 Saferworld focus group discussion, women in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 96 Saferworld interview with woman national MP for Galmudug, February 2020.
- 97 McCullough A, Saed M (2017), ‘Gatekeepers, elders and accountability in Somalia’, Overseas Development Institute, December (<https://www.odi.org/publications/10996-gatekeepers-elders-and-accountability-somalia>)
- 98 For example, see: Gardner J, Warsame AM (2004), ‘Women, Clan Identity and Peace-Building’, in J Gardner, J El-Bushra (eds.), *Somalia – The Untold Story. The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press), pp 153–165; East Africa Research Fund (2017), ‘Somali Women’s Political Participation and Leadership – Evidence and Opportunities’, Policy Brief, June.
- 99 Saferworld interview with woman national MP for Galmudug, February 2020.
- 100 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 101 Saferworld interview, elder in Galka’yo, April 2019.
- 102 East Africa Research Fund (2017), ‘Somali Women’s Political Participation and Leadership: evidence and opportunities’, Policy Brief, June ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59b657e4e5274a5cfdad2d36/Somali\\_women\\_s\\_political\\_participation\\_and\\_leadership\\_evidence\\_and\\_opportunities\\_Final\\_Policy\\_Briefing\\_Note.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59b657e4e5274a5cfdad2d36/Somali_women_s_political_participation_and_leadership_evidence_and_opportunities_Final_Policy_Briefing_Note.pdf))
- 103 UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (2016), ‘Somali religious scholars defend 30 percent quota for women’, 8 October (<https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somali-religious-scholars-defend-30-percent-quota-women>)
- 104 Menkhaus K (2018), ‘Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Somalia Case Study’, Stabilisation Unit, February.
- 105 Saferworld interview, elder in Adaado, April 2019.
- 106 Saferworld interview with woman national MP for Galmudug, February 2020.
- 107 Saferworld focus group discussion, minority women in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 108 Saferworld focus group discussion, minority clan men in Adaado, April 2019.
- 109 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Adaado, April 2019.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 Saferworld interview with elder in Adaado, April 2019.
- 112 Saferworld focus group discussion, IDPs in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 113 Saferworld interview with elder in Adaado, April 2019.
- 114 Saferworld focus group discussion, IDPs in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 115 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Adaado, April 2019.
- 116 International Crisis Group (2015), ‘Galka’yo and Somalia’s Dangerous Faultlines’, 10 December (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/galkayo-and-somalia-s-dangerous-faultlines>)
- 117 Saferworld interview, elder in Heraale, April 2019.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 The full list of commissions is: Human Rights Commission, The Office of the Ombudsman, the Anti-Corruption Commission, Parliamentary Service Commission, Boundaries and Federation Inter-state Commission, National Independent Electoral Commission, National Security Commission, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Judicial Service Commission (<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/Somalia-Constitution2012.pdf>)
- 120 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 121 The SSF is a multi-donor fund aiming to contribute to enhancing stability in Somalia. It ‘operates across the newly-formed Federal Member States in Somalia to address structural drivers of conflict and instability, with a focus on addressing key fault-lines that drive political conflict; fostering community-government relations; increasing popular participation in governance; and reducing vulnerability to conflict in targeted areas.’ See: <http://stabilityfund.so/>
- 122 Somalia Stability Fund (2015), ‘Facilitating the formation of the Interim Galmudug Administration’, 31 August (<http://stabilityfund.so/2015/08/31/facilitating-the-formation-of-the-interim-galmudug-administration/>)
- 123 Saferworld interview with district official, Adaado, April 2019.
- 124 See: Laws E (2018), ‘Thinking and working politically in Somalia: A case study on the Somalia Stability Fund’, Overseas Development Institute, May (<https://www.odi.org/publications/11136-thinking-and-working-politically-somalia-case-study-somalia-stability-fund>)



Water distribution point at  
Damanyo IDP Camp, Gurieel town,  
Galmudug.

© Mohamed Dhagacade

# 4

## What has federalism done for you? Changes in security, service provision and civic space

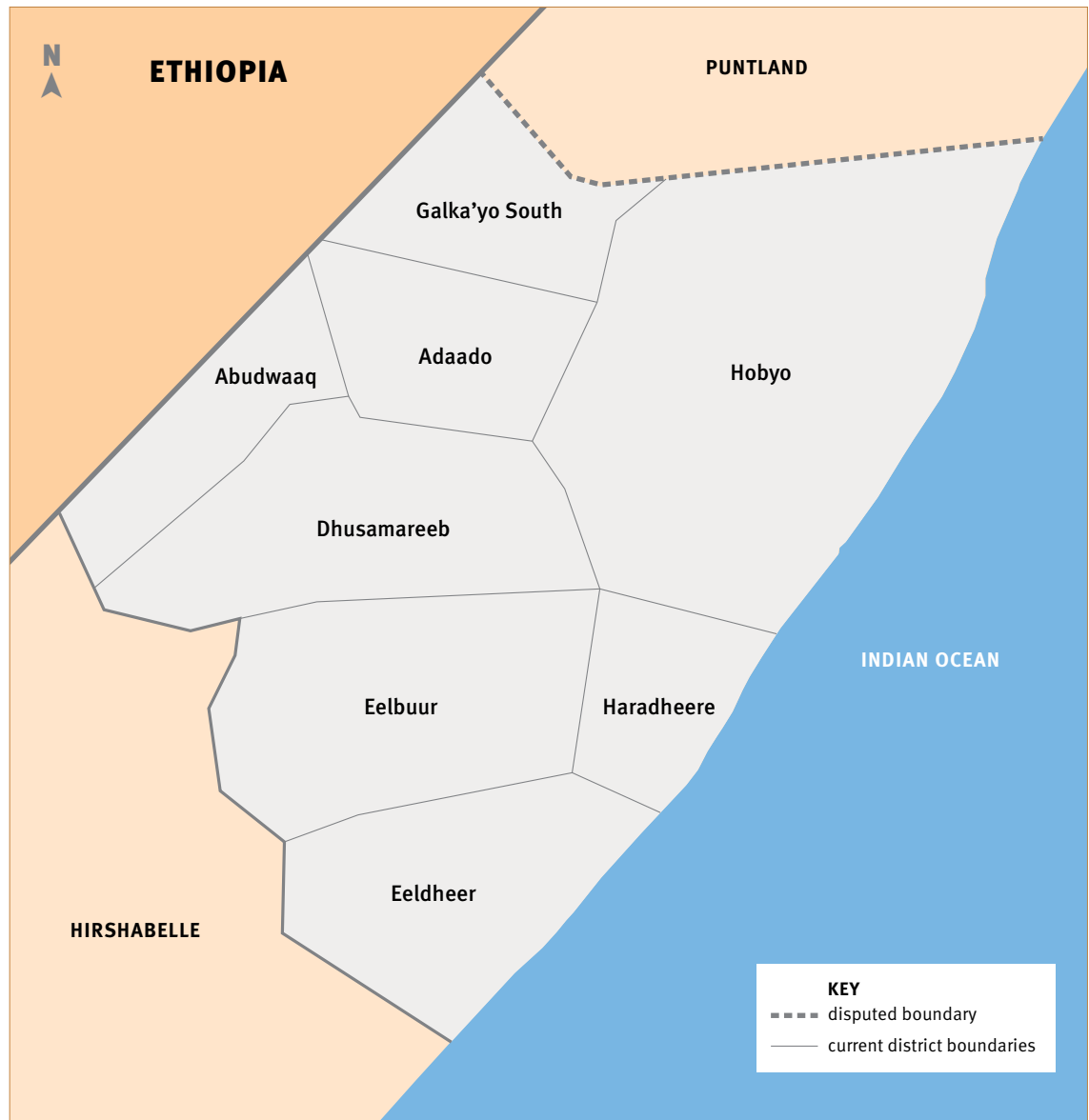
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**Officially, Galmudug is made up of ten districts: Dhusamareeb, Adaado, Abudwaaq, Balamballe, Eeldheer, Eelbuur, Galhareeri, Galka'yo South, Hobyo and Haradheere. It was, however, difficult to get comprehensive information on the form, functions and mandate of Galmudug's administration and its districts; for example, official district boundaries and the revenue sources available to the regional state, including taxation, fiscal transfers from Mogadishu, who has oversight of this within the administration, and how it is allocated across the districts.**

### 4.1 Galmudug state: form and function

Unconfirmed figures suggest that Galmudug's budget is USD\$17 million for 2020. Salaries for the police, military and intelligence are mostly paid by the central government. There were also indications that airport tax is a major source of revenue for Galmudug's Ministry of Finance: there are six airports in Galmudug (Adaado, Galka'yo, Abudwaaq, Dhusamareeb, Gurieel and Hobyo), which are managed by private companies contracted by the district authority. Checkpoints into major towns are also a source of revenue. At the district level, taxes are in theory collected from businesses and shops, but the extent of this could not be verified. The Galmudug FMS government and the district councils also appear to receive considerable funds from NGOs and businesses. For example, NGOs support FMS ministries by working with and through the Ministry of Health to set up and provide supplies, equipment and services at hospitals, as well as health and nutrition projects in outlying villages. Councils are also funded directly by international donors for joint local governance and health projects. One example of this is a Joint Program of Local Governance, funded by the UN Development Programme, which focuses on building roads and lighting on highways.

## Galmudug districts



Administrative boundaries for the districts of Balamballe and Galhareeri are not displayed on this map due to missing or unavailable data. The boundaries, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Data sources (data has been modified): UNOCHA and International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)

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Many institutions – especially at the district level – are yet to be fully formalised or have developed unevenly.”

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the 2020 elections. This uneven development is linked to the existence and formation of institutions pre-dating the establishment of the current Galmudug state – institutions that existed under the Himan and Heeb administration and the initial

Galmudug administration headquartered in Galka'yo South. The ‘tarmac effect’ – which refers to towns that grew up around the road linking Galmudug’s southern and central regions – also resulted in uneven development; one respondent described how “the district council was formed ten years ago” in Adaado, while other districts still do not have councils.<sup>125</sup> In these areas, and particularly in urban centres, district administrations do provide some services and collect revenue. However, the reach of any district is also determined by the extent to which clans or the administration assert physical control over territory, as al-Shabaab is still present in some parts of Galmudug – supposedly in the south around the towns of Galhareeri, Eelbuur, Haradheere and Eldheer.

## 4.2 Conflict and security

### 4.2.1 Decreased inter-clan conflict

There was a general sense from respondents (both men and women) that the overall security situation has improved across all districts of Galmudug. This was measured by levels of freedom of movement and inter-community interaction. As an adviser to an international donor described, Galmudug is perhaps the only federal state in which it is possible for the president of Somalia to drive from one side to another without threats from al-Shabaab.<sup>126</sup> The process of state formation, in which “the 11 clans of Galmudug met to discuss and reconcile their hostilities before they even discussed the Galmudug state formation”, facilitated this improved security.<sup>127</sup> Before the Adaado conference, clan division lines – both territorial boundaries and perceived differences – meant that members of other clans would not or could not cross these lines for fear of attack, limiting movement between and among clans and sub-clans. Nearly every clan had ongoing disputes with neighbouring clans, particularly over territorial boundaries, land for pasture, animal raiding, water access points, revenge killing and blood disputes.<sup>128</sup> The pre-Galmudug Himan and Heeb administration developed primarily as a vehicle to resolve tensions between the Saleeban sub-clans – which were in perpetual conflict with one other – and so address outside threats and issues with a united front. The administration successfully established peace and security within its own boundaries, although it was in conflict with all four of its neighbouring areas. Galmudug state was formed in a similar way but on a larger scale – bringing all the clans within the region under one administration.

While major inter-clan conflicts appear to have decreased between Galmudug’s districts and there is a level of freedom of movement across the region, security within districts and particularly outside of urban centres is more dubious. This study was unable to gather data from rural areas, but several respondents indicated that sub-clan relations remain fractured and tense in rural areas and that low-level conflicts are frequent, “especially in the rural areas where clan militias are not disarmed and are still in conflict, which the administration is doing nothing about”.<sup>129</sup> This rings true when considered in a historical context: since the collapse of the Somali central government in the 1990s, the politics of security, peace and reconciliation have been mainly focused on urban areas. Rural areas were left to

solve their problems themselves, and clan and inter/intra-clan conflicts over grazing lands and water persist. State-building plans and activities often start in urban centres, and this is evident from Galmudug’s experience of state formation so far. Conflicts over land, pasture and water points in places like Balamballe, Gurieel and Heraale are not new and date back to before the start of the civil war.

### 4.2.2 New and emerging conflicts

As well as emerging tensions between Galmudug state and the central state, more than 50 per cent of respondents expressed concerns that federalism was creating new forms of (clan) conflict – both within Galmudug but also with neighbouring regions, and in particular Puntland. Although an agreement between the two FMSs was signed in 2016, localised clan boundary clashes in and around Galka’yo are ongoing.<sup>130</sup> Both Galmudug and Puntland are power bases of their respective dominant clans – the Hawiye-HabarGidir and Darod-Majerteen – and Puntland’s concern as Galmudug formed was that a stronger neighbour would be more able to contest clan-based territorial claims. Predictably, the move towards federalism escalated pre-existing clan conflicts over land, infrastructure and resources in disputed areas. This followed moves by the Sa’ad clan, which is dominant in South Galka’yo, to protect its own territory from coming under Puntland’s control while also expanding its influence in West Mudug, and areas traditionally controlled by the Majerteen and Leelkase clans.<sup>131</sup>

The formalisation of political positions, which bring the promise of resources and influence, has also increased competition for political office: “some clans felt they did not get the share they deserved and started conflict”.<sup>132</sup> This has also led to people making competing claims to represent towns and other places in pursuit of political positions, even at the district level. “Before, candidates were implored to represent their clans, but these days people fight to be representatives.”<sup>133</sup> One of the consequences of federalism is that smaller clans attempt to cleave out a constituency from an existing district so as to claim a political position and office – these may be rejected by bigger clans, which sometimes leads to conflict. Previously, sub-clans were content if a member of their broader clan gained a political position, but they now also seek representation, leading to increased contestation and the need for negotiation within clans and sub-clans. For example, in Heraale a longstanding conflict between Dir and Marihan clans took on a different dimension in 2016

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The formalisation of political positions, which bring the promise of resources and influence, has also increased competition for political office.  
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after the Dir clan asked the FGS to recognise Heraale as a district. The Marihan opposed the request, because Heraale was at that time part of their Abudwaaq district – the resultant fighting led to 39 deaths.<sup>134</sup>

Despite ASWJ's non-clan affiliation, their inclusion has also hardened inter- and intra-clan tensions. In Heraale, some Dir sub-clans were in support of ASWJ while others developed an opposition to them during the initial state formation process; this led to localised clashes over the past three years between Dir factions – each supported by other clans (Saleeban and Marihan on one side and Ayr from Dhusamareeb, the base of ASWJ, on the other).

These conflicts are not on the same scale as previous ones but they do flare up periodically and feed into tensions between centres of power within Galmudug (Adaado, Dhusamareeb and, to a lesser extent, Galka'yo) and with factions within the FGS. They also become a distraction for political leaders from the everyday business of consolidating and developing state capacities and structures, as well as a barrier to their working relations in order to achieve such goals.

### 4.2.3 Security concerns of women

Women, like other respondents, readily visualised security through the lens of the clan, and further probing was required to illicit gender-specific concerns. However, there were some pertinent reflections on clan fighting 'over' women, suggesting that women are seen as members of clans in specific ways – attached to the identity of men, but also as assets for a clan. "There is currently occasional fighting between clans. Most people fight over camels and women."<sup>135</sup> A key part of clan conflict resolution agreements – as a way to honour a peace agreement – is for a woman or girl from the perpetrators' clan to marry a member of the injured clan. This is referred to as *godob reeb*, meaning 'ending the feud'. "The perpetrators' family/clan

give a girl to the victim's clan/family for marriage in an effort to avoid possible revenge and ensure a long-term resolution."<sup>136</sup>

Women are often given two identities: "by blood she is part of her clan and always carries her name and her father's name. Socially, she is attached to the identity of her husband as his wife."<sup>137</sup> Such attachments to men members of the family have important security and political implications: for the clan they are viewed as a cause of conflict, and for women their individual security concerns become secondary

to those of the clan's. Both of these implications impede women's choices in being active agents socially and politically. Other studies have carried out in-depth explorations of changing gender roles, women's dual relationships within the patrilineal kinship system, and their contribution to peacemaking, as well as the combined impact of violence, displacement, material loss and insecurity on women.<sup>138</sup>

### 4.2.4 Conflict reduction and the federal state

According to AMISOM's *Operational Readiness Assessment* report from 2019, Galmudug has the highest number of regional security forces.<sup>139</sup> Addressing Galmudug's security challenges is complicated, however, by security forces' continued clan affinities. There have been positive developments to consolidate the various clan-based militias, as well as ASWJ forces, into one force affiliated to the Somalia National Army, which has gained more control over the diverse militias, putting them all at the same command level and bringing the clans into a Galmudug-wide security project. This has had some impact on security; for example, leading to the removal of illegal roadblocks erected by clan militias or armed individuals who operated along major roads such as the Mogadishu-Galka'yo highway, which crosses large parts of districts such as Adaado. Joint policing efforts between the Puntland and Galmudug administrations have also been created and sustained in Galka'yo – this formed part of the 2017 peace agreement between the two FMSs and, supported by AMISOM and UNISOM, involves cross-border operational cooperation, solidarity and daily information sharing.<sup>140</sup> There are also indications that Adaado and Abudwaaq have conducted successful joint policing operations in response to cross-border tensions over access to water and land for animal grazing. This included community reporting of issues to officials – despite the lack of a district council in Abudwaaq. These two initiatives have been supported by international resourcing and capacity support, but crucially also benefitted from Adaado district inheriting governance structures, capacities and resources from the previous Himan and Heeb administration (based on successful clan consensus building). The district as a whole reports low levels of crime.

Security forces are likely to maintain allegiance to clan interests over fledging formal structures, compromising their ability to mediate common clan conflicts. Security forces are primarily based where their clans are dominant – for example, a police officer working in Heraale will most likely be a

“**Women are often given two identities: “By blood she is part of her clan and always carries her name and her father’s name. Socially, she is attached to the identity of her husband as his wife.”**

Woman research participant.



member of a Heraale-based clan. This changed in 2019, and some security officers are now sent to areas outside of where their communities reside, but as yet there is not much available information on the impact of this.<sup>141</sup>

The scale of Galmudug's regional forces obscures the internal divisions within its forces, and the international focus on repelling and defeating al-Shabaab distracts from the consolidation of shared operational goals internally. Historic clan power-sharing arrangements show the ability of clans to come together against external forces while being unable to address internal disruptive forces and disagreements. This is exacerbated by the added dimension of tensions with the FGS: for example, in February 2020, FGS and ASWJ forces clashed heavily (with mortars and anti-aircraft guns) for several days – beginning in Dhusamareeb and extending to Heraale.<sup>142</sup>

A potential complementarity therefore exists between clan and formal security and justice provision. The balance is tipped towards clan structures, with clan elders continuing to be the main mechanism for mediating and resolving disputes – “no case is resolved by the courts without the blessing of the elders”.<sup>143</sup> Confidence in local courts is low due to perceptions of “corruption and bias”, and there is a reliance on elders to help implement decisions, due to the “lack of effective enforcement powers”. Those involved in managing conflicts extends beyond clan/state forces to the private sector – for example, in Adaado (and previously Himan and Heeb), a telecommunications company has supported community conflict resolution activities between sub-clans or clans, including peace meetings and the payment of blood money. The multiplicity of actors – private, state, clan, donor and NGO – involved in security and justice provision (and service provision as discussed later) raises questions of consistency and coverage but also provides opportunities for supporting more effective institutions. Rather than relying on the capacity of one authority, pooled and targeted resourcing between many may be more effective as well as pragmatic – if there are shared interests and incentives in a common set of outcomes, with some form of (ideally similarly hybrid) oversight.

## 4.3 Provision of services

As elsewhere in Somalia, there are fundamental barriers to development in Galmudug that pre-date but which are also hugely exacerbated by the years of conflict. Infrastructure quality and quantity such as roads, waste management and water supply are poor, while sustainable and diverse employment opportunities are limited. This leaves many Somalis reliant on agriculture and livestock, which are precarious livelihoods given the environmental conditions and frequent droughts.<sup>145</sup> Meanwhile, political armed violence and conflict still permeate parts of the country, with al-Shabaab's capability to mount attacks contributing to a general nationwide sense of insecurity and fear.

The reduction in large-scale clan violence and associated increased freedom of movement was linked to (in theory) greater mobility for seeking employment and a safer environment for children, especially girls, to travel to schools and other educational institutions. It has also improved the general climate for service provision, development programmes and construction projects. Respondents observed schools and other learning institutions being built, and women in particular referred to the construction of wells. Some public services, such as obtaining official documents like birth certificates and passports, are now available at the district level – for example, applications for trade licences in Galka'yo South and Adaado and passport services in Galka'yo South, Adaado, Dhusamareeb and Abudwaaq can now be made within the district, rather than needing to travel to Mogadishu. People also talked about more effective responses to crisis situations such as the massive drought in 2017. A livestock owner in Dhusamareeb shared: “I lost all my animals during the drought and the administration has assisted us with water, milk and other humanitarian assistance. The people have also supported us well.”<sup>146</sup>

### 4.3.1 Women's changing roles

Increased education opportunities and changing expectations of gender roles have resulted in higher literacy rates for women, with women and girls accessing education in ways they had not been able to before. “Women's literacy levels were previously very poor. Girls were rarely taken to school and were expected to help in family chores. Boys were given priority and brought from villages to town for education. Even girls in towns were not given the same chance for education.”<sup>147</sup> The introduction of





Police officers from Puntland and Galmudug states attend the closing ceremony of a Joint Police Patrol Training conducted by AMISOM and UN officers in Galka'yo on 19 December 2017.  
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federalism cannot be solely credited with these changes. The civil war in the 1990s also led to serious social and economic disruptions. Gender roles shifted, with women taking on the role of breadwinner much more as men were pulled into fighting and faced other insecurities. The migration of many Somalis outside of the country also influenced thinking within Somali society, particularly opinions towards education and girls; as a result, more families choose to educate girls as well as boys.

Such changes have meant that the next generation of women are now making greater demands for political participation and influence over policy and decision-making to reflect their needs and priorities. “Women’s empowerment has led to women forming groups and organisations, and having some sort of pressure.”<sup>148</sup> While it was previously frowned upon or not customary for women to be political representatives, there is greater visibility and debate on issues of concern for women and space for them

to seek participation. Studies have also shown that there are opportunities for some privileged women from certain influential clans to navigate restrictive social ‘rules’. Women already working in the political space have leveraged supportive relationships with progressive men clan leaders and other men powerholders within and outside of the political system to support their candidacies, in addition to strengthening and maintaining support within their communities through regular engagement.<sup>149</sup> There are opportunities to re-negotiate limiting norms and expectations, with some women describing the ways they have overcome barriers, including through connections to (or being from) the diaspora, and through their experiences growing up in supportive family environments, with fathers acting as particularly visible role models for young women.<sup>150</sup> In these cases, women described their access to education as a critical factor in building their skills and competencies.



However, a person's ability to access services under federalism is linked to the political position and influence of their clan – services, employment and other opportunities (whether provided publicly or privately) are benefits of securing a political position and a territorial constituency that are meant to accrue for the whole clan. Representatives are therefore judged on whether they “bring benefit to their clan”.<sup>151</sup> If a politician hopes to be (re)selected for another term they need to ensure the advancement of their clan, and this encourages the accumulation of wealth.

It is worth remembering that the resources available for service provision in Somalia are limited, especially since resource sharing, fiscal transfers and taxation are still being negotiated between FMSs and with the FGS. For example, while there is a Galmudug Revenue Collection Authority, its functions are limited until the time that “taxpayer registration, returns processing and collection functions expand as the number of taxpayers and tax types increase”.<sup>152</sup>

### 4.3.2 Multiple sources of service provision

Services are obtained from multiple sources: private companies (health, electricity, education, water and telecommunications) and international and national NGOs (health and other basic services) through the FMS institutions. One example respondents gave was of a public works project linking Galka'yo South and Hobyo Port on the Indian Ocean. Although ostensibly implemented by Galka'yo South's local administration, road construction is being financed by clan elites from the area who are not part of the administration. Another example was a water security project, undertaken by the Galmudug Ministry of Planning and the World Bank-funded Biyoole Project, to support water access and livelihoods for pastoralists and farming households. Access to employment and income-generating opportunities is another potential benefit gained by a clan member attaining political office, and the rise

of international NGOs in particular and private-sector presences (offices, projects and staff) bring potential job or housing rental prospects. While the Galmudug administration was credited with helping those affected by drought, the reality is that crisis response is often financed by the Somali diaspora or by NGOs through the regional or district administration. The latest example was the 2019 flooding of Beledweyne in HirShabelle state after the Shabelle river burst its banks, leaving 200,000 people displaced. The biggest humanitarian assistance came from Somaliland and the Somali diaspora, which provided more than \$600,000 and \$350,000 respectively.<sup>153</sup> As a result, many people do not attribute changes directly to the new government: “we hear a lot of good things but we do not see anything positive done by the administration”.<sup>154</sup> Moving forward with effective security, justice and service provision involves understanding the matrix of different service providers.

who are in power and they get the opportunities like attending seminars, jobs in NGOs and other places, renting houses to NGOs. Those in power do not want to share the little privileges that come with power, for example, jobs.”<sup>157</sup> Accountability and transparency of political processes and politicians will take time to embed within the federal structure. There are few formal political mechanisms to hold the emerging political class – for whom maintaining the status quo is profitable – to account.

“  
The increased flow of private, donor and international NGO financing to FMSs distorts and becomes part of the political economy of federalism.

The increased flow of private, donor and international NGO financing to FMSs distorts and becomes part of the political economy of federalism, increasing potential revenue opportunities and, consequently, competition for political office – in the worst instance becoming a conflict driver itself, at the same time as distancing representatives from their community members.

”  
Politicians were viewed as not being ‘visible’ to their constituencies, and accused of only visiting their district at election times and for campaigning purposes. National-level MPs in particular are viewed as “tourists, travelling from one place to another”.<sup>155</sup> The high entry costs associated with the election process itself mean that many “borrow money to fund their candidacy; using the ‘income’ to pay back their debt”.<sup>156</sup> The requirements and rewards for politicians who run for office encourage them to make deals with other elites, particularly clan elders or private companies, rather than pursue a development agenda for the benefit of their constituents. There are indications that an emergent political class of elected representatives is developing interests and pursuing relations with business leaders and external actors independent of clan concerns, and further analysis is needed on the extent to which they remain connected to, and reliant on, clan elders and leaders – and on the implications of an emerging political elite for accountability and state development. The introduction of ASWJ has also had an impact, effectively adding another ‘clan’ to the power-sharing equation and intensifying competition over the limited resources available: “Now we have ASWJ

## 4.4 Civic activism

Civic space in Somalia is a complicated arena. Other studies have already discussed the differing meanings of ‘civil society’ – also referred to as ‘non-state actors’ by Saferworld<sup>158</sup> – in the country, which encompasses far more than a collection of NGOs, community-based organisations, professional associations and institutions; it also includes the private sector, media, professionals and traditional elders.<sup>159</sup> Traditional elders are in fact often seen as the core of civil society in Somalia, mediating between society and authorities in social and political spheres.<sup>160</sup> As noted earlier, NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) play a significant role in service provision. To some Somalis, however, CSOs are seen mainly to represent donor interests.

In Galmudug, most of the civic activism we came across was either directly set up or funded primarily by international donors or international NGOs. In particular, there has been a surge in women and youth organisations in every region, though these operate primarily at the district level. “Currently, the youth are getting involved in everything, same with women. The new system of governance has shown that everyone can be part of the system. It motivates different groups (women, youth), prepares them for political participation, encourages education and creates empowerment.”<sup>161</sup> Women’s ‘social halls’, where women’s organisations converge, have been established in most districts, with funds provided by donors or NGOs such as the United States Agency for International Development’s Transition Initiatives for Stabilization. Similar youth platforms have also emerged.

### 4.4.1 From out of the shadows: women shadow parliaments in Galmudug

A significant outcome for women from the introduction of federalism has been the creation of ‘shadow parliaments’ (see box, right), which have been developed at the district level in a number of places in Galmudug, including Adaado, Dhusamareeb, Gurieel, Abudwaaq and Galka’yo.

Shadow parliaments are important forums to help “prepare women to be actively involved in politics and empower them to fight for political and gender representation”.<sup>162</sup> While it could be argued that parliament reinforces the household or caregiver roles that women are associated with – for example, making tea or food – a forum that accommodates traditional social practices while concurrently encouraging bolder political engagement could help

### Case study: women’s shadow parliament, Adaado

The shadow parliament in Adaado is an independent social committee made up of 20 women. It aims to advocate for women in decision-making at the district level. There is also a joint district committee that advocates for women in decision-making at FMS-level politics, and on issues that affect women in their daily lives. The 20 members are also ‘prepared’ for political participation, with the aim that they become members of the district council in the next four years.

The shadow parliament in Adaado was founded by the women’s association there in October 2018 and is funded by a national NGO, Daryeel Bulsho Guud. Members were selected based on their achievements and commitment as part of the women’s association.

The committee members work closely with the Adaado local administration, which provides a road map and work schedule for members to follow and an update on each decision taken by the Adaado district administration. The shadow parliament in Adaado advocates and participates in events and cultural demonstrations, including contributing so-called ‘cultural items’ that are a key part of these gatherings – such as tea, milk, meat and household items. Members also encourage the community to participate in cultural events in the district.

The committee also organises seminars, including on the role of women in politics, women’s participation and women’s empowerment. There have also been three debates in the shadow parliament since it was founded, on the following topics:

1. the broad role of women in decision-making
2. why female genital mutation has not stopped
3. women’s participation in formal decision-making at the local, FMS and national level

break down the stigma and fears around women taking on political roles. Signs of change are already showing: district council selection took place in early 2020, with a significant rise in women candidates, who are now looking to contest the next Galmudug parliamentary elections.

The introduction of formal political institutions at regional and district levels, where there were previously few administrative structures, provides a target for advocacy. But the adoption of a federal system has also polarised CSOs into fragmented, competing and disempowered regional blocs.<sup>163</sup> Community-led organisations risk being divided along regional or political lines, and are often associated too closely with political leaders (either supporting the state administration or the opposition party or clan). In Galmudug, relations between youth and women's organisations and formal institutions were evidently stronger at the district level, and it is hard to cut across clan lines. Many groups claimed to already be working across clan divisions, but in reality membership rarely extends to minority clans. Broader cross-district organisation and mobilisation is limited – for example, youth groups “are organised either at district or clan level and there is no united organisation that works toward a common interest across Galmudug state”.<sup>164</sup>

Close political or clan relations can have two effects. On the one hand, they can be a bridge and help build effective networks. In some districts such as Adaado, CSOs expect to be consulted by the district administration on relevant issues and have a close relationship with the district council and elected representatives. On the other hand, some respondents felt that the relationship with politicians, officials and institutions was more instrumental, and that organisations were called upon by the administration “when there is work to do, for example, community work or ceremonies where government or other officials come to our town, and the administration needs help with something”.<sup>165</sup> The overall impression was that although there might be interaction, there is little sense of influencing or successful advocacy on issues. “Women are in contact with the administration, but in most cases the administration does not respond to their needs or resolve their challenges.”<sup>166</sup>

Decision-making and participation are still seen as relatively hierarchical. Broader engagement, dialogue and consultations beyond political and clan elites are not uncommon but their actual influence on outcomes is not clear. For example, as part of the preliminary stage of the selection process, a candidate might convene a community-wide meeting to present their case, or the selection council might engage in consultations with the various religious leaders and women and youth groups of the clan the candidate belongs to. The final decision, however, is with clan elders, and, as we have seen, the criteria are orientated towards financial gain and opportunity. Women and youth organisations are mostly voluntary – particularly women's organisations – and their activities focus on community mobilisation, violence reduction campaigns, social cohesion issues (including public health, such as the importance of hygiene and sanitation) and environmental conservation, as well as women's welfare activities and skills training. Their ability to engage on more politically sensitive topics – such as elections, boundaries, clan disputes or resource sharing, or on topics that raise questions on existing power structures such as women's security issues – is restrained.

There are opportunities to develop greater networks and peer support of CSOs at national and district levels, especially on shared issues of concern and in support of broader citizen engagement – particularly in light of the range of providers of services, security and justice. International donors and NGOs can engage with issues of how legitimacy, accountability and relationships are acquired and maintained by different CSOs as they grapple with strengthening internal democratisation.<sup>167</sup> This also demands reflection from authority bodies – government, customary, donor or private – on the role CSOs can play in mediating relations within society.

## Notes

- 125 Saferworld interview with district official, Adaado, March 2020.
- 126 Saferworld interview, March 2020.
- 127 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Heraale, April 2019.
- 128 Almost all clans, and particularly those that share borders, fought in the past. Identified clan disputes were between: Saleeban (located in Adaado) and Marihan (in Dhabad); Sa'ad (in Gallinsoor) and Saleeban (in Adaado); Marihan (in Balamballe) and Ayr (in Gurieel); Dir (in Heraale) and Marihan (in Abudwaaq); Ayr (in Dhusamareeb) and Duduble (in Eelbuur).
- 129 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 130 UN Department of Political Affairs (2017), 'Sustaining Peace in Somalia: Reconciliation in Gaalkacyo', *Politically Speaking 2017 in Review*, December ([https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/ps\\_yearend\\_2017.pdf](https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/ps_yearend_2017.pdf))
- 131 International Crisis Group (2015), 'Galka'yo and Somalia's Dangerous Faultlines', 10 December (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/galkayo-and-somalia-s-dangerous-faultlines>)
- 132 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Heraale, April 2019.
- 133 Saferworld focus group discussion, youth in Adaado, April 2019.
- 134 The conflict was resolved through *Xeer*: 'The negotiation and payment of blood compensation for the 39 people that lost their lives in the fighting in Heraale was led by clan elders and paid by the people of Adaado (it was unusual for a clan outside of the dispute to pay the Diya); as a result the conflict was resolved.' Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Heraale, April 2019.
- 135 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Adaado, April 2019.
- 136 Saferworld focus group discussion, elders in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 137 Saferworld focus group discussion, women in Galka'yo, April 2019.
- 138 In particular, see: Gardner J, El-Bushra J (eds.) (2004), *Somalia – The Untold Story. The War through the Eyes of Somali Women* (London: Pluto Press); UN Development Programme (2012), 'Gender in Somalia' ([https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/Women's%20Empowerment/Gender\\_Somalia.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/Women's%20Empowerment/Gender_Somalia.pdf)); UK Home Office (2018), 'Country Policy and Information Note. Somalia: Women fearing gender-based violence', April ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/698322/somalia-women-fearing-gender-based-violence-cpin.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698322/somalia-women-fearing-gender-based-violence-cpin.pdf)); Rayale S, Pomfret E, Wright D (2015), 'Somali Solutions: Creating conditions for a gender-just peace', Oxfam, August (<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/somali-solutions-creating-conditions-for-a-gender-just-peace-561272>); AMISOM (2016), 'Somali Women's Participation in Politics and Public Life', November 15 (<https://amisom-au.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Somali-Womens-Participation-in-Politics-and-Public-Life.pdf>); Gardner J, El-Bushra J (2017), 'Somalia: A state of male power, insecurity and inequality', Rift Valley Institute, *Impact of War on Men Briefing Paper 2*, March.
- 139 AMISOM (2019), *Operational Readiness Assessment*, February.
- 140 UN Department of Political Affairs (2017), 'Sustaining Peace in Somalia: Reconciliation in Gaalkacyo', *Politically Speaking 2017 in Review*, December ([https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/ps\\_yearend\\_2017.pdf](https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/ps_yearend_2017.pdf))
- 141 This applies to the ordinary police, as officers from the federal intelligence agencies or National Intelligence (NISA) are already from different clan backgrounds.
- 142 Sheikh A (2020), 'Clashes break out in Somalia, slowing fight against al Qaeda-linked insurgents', *Reuters*, 28 February (<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-security/clashes-break-out-in-somalia-slowing-fight-against-al-qaeda-linked-insurgents-idUKKN20M261>)
- 143 Saferworld focus group discussion with youth in Galka'yo, April 2019.
- 144 Saferworld interview with elder in Galka'yo, April 2019.
- 145 A scan of humanitarian situation reports for Somalia, particularly in the last two to three years, highlights the precarious situation its population faces. For example, see: World Vision (2019), 'Somalia: Situation Report: September 1 - September 30, 2019', 17 October.
- 146 Saferworld interview with elder in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 147 Saferworld focus group discussion with women in Adaado, April 2019.
- 148 Saferworld focus group discussion with women in Galka'yo, April 2019.
- 149 East Africa Research Fund (2017), 'Somali Women's Political Participation and Leadership: evidence and opportunities', Policy Brief, June ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59b657e4e52745cfd2d36/Somali\\_women\\_s\\_political\\_participation\\_and\\_leadership\\_Evidence\\_and\\_opportunities\\_Final\\_Policy\\_Briefing\\_Note.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59b657e4e52745cfd2d36/Somali_women_s_political_participation_and_leadership_Evidence_and_opportunities_Final_Policy_Briefing_Note.pdf))
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 Saferworld interview with elder in Adaado, April 2019.
- 152 As such, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for taxation policy for now. See Galmudug Ministry of Finance website: <https://galmudugmof.so/revenue-collection-authority>
- 153 Farah J (2019), 'Somaliland sends first humanitarian Aid to Beledweyne', *Horn Diplomat*, 21 December (<https://www.horndiplomat.com/2019/12/21/somaliland-sends-first-humanitarian-aid-to-beledweyne/>). At present, Somalia's diaspora is estimated to remit nearly twice the level of official development assistance and five times the level of humanitarian aid annually. Remittances account for about one-third of GDP, roughly equivalent to government revenues, and help to support livelihoods for an estimated 40 per cent of the population. Remittances also help finance Somalia's large trade deficit, paying for a sizeable portion of imports. Desai RM (2019), 'Somalia's path to stability', Brookings Institute, 2 October (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/>)
- 154 Saferworld focus group discussion with women in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 155 Saferworld focus group discussion with men in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 156 Ibid.
- 157 Saferworld focus group discussion with youth in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 158 In 2007, Saferworld, recognising that categorisations of civil society can be misrepresentative of the Somalia context, chose to use the concept 'non-state actors' (NSAs). See: <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/news-and-analysis/post/775-the-role-of-civil-society-in-somaliaas-reconstruction-achievements-challenges-and-opportunities>
- 159 Gundel J, Allen S (2017), 'Civil society and civic engagement in accountability in Somalia', Katuni/IAAAP, February ([http://katuni.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/IAAAP-KP4\\_CIV\\_shared\\_opt\\_Public.pdf](http://katuni.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/IAAAP-KP4_CIV_shared_opt_Public.pdf))
- 160 Osman F (2018), 'The role of civil society in Somalia's reconstruction: achievements, challenges and opportunities', Saferworld, June.
- 161 Saferworld focus group discussion with women in Adaado, April 2019.
- 162 Ibid.
- 163 Osman F (2018), 'The role of civil society in Somalia's reconstruction: achievements, challenges and opportunities', Saferworld, 4 June (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/news-and-analysis/post/775-the-role-of-civil-society-in-somaliaas-reconstruction-achievements-challenges-and-opportunities>)
- 164 Saferworld focus group discussion with youth in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 165 Saferworld focus group discussion with youth in Abudwaaq, April 2019.
- 166 Saferworld focus group discussion with women in Dhusamareeb, April 2019.
- 167 Osman F (2018), 'The role of civil society in Somalia's reconstruction: achievements, challenges and opportunities', Saferworld, 4 June (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/news-and-analysis/post/775-the-role-of-civil-society-in-somaliaas-reconstruction-achievements-challenges-and-opportunities>)

ADADO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

مطار عداادو الدولي

WELCOME TO ADADO

# 5

## “Before we were shirtless, now we wear a shirt with no buttons”: federalisation in Galmudug

**2020 is a crucial year for Somalia. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, ‘one person, one vote’ elections had been planned for the first time in 50 years, and the government had also committed to adopting an amended constitution by June.<sup>168</sup> AMISOM is facing major changes, with a UN Security Council mandated independent assessment due to review international engagement in Somalia and present new options for security arrangements.**

Against this backdrop, the consolidation of federalism across Somalia is seen as a core component of national and international political, development and security strategies for the country. It is intended to help strengthen the country’s ability to provide for its people, to promote political stability, and to assist national and regional authorities to jointly combat security threats from al-Shabaab. However, Somalia’s federal story is still only partly scripted, and the experience so far suggests there are a number of plot twists yet to come.

“**Somalia’s federal story is still only partly scripted, and the experience so far suggests there are a number of plot twists yet to come.**”

### 5.1 Federalisation in Somalia – fit for purpose?

There is ongoing debate about whether federalism is right for Somalia; many argue that the model better suits countries with ethnically heterogeneous populations, rather than homogenous ones, such as Somalia. By adopting federalism to satisfy clan interests, federalism in Somalia has promoted political accommodation between clans, but has not in itself provided a vehicle for national reconciliation.



Decentralisation, whether in a federal form or not, is no silver bullet for fragmented states. Somalia's approach stands in contrast to devolution in contexts such as Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where decentralisation has in fact been fairly centralised – formulated by the centre to be implemented at the sub-national level. On the one hand, Somalia's approach has led to contestation between the FGS and some individual FMSs. The FGS has sought to exert influence by (not so) covertly developing allies in the FMSs, rather than through the sort of patronage networks created by national governments in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On the other hand, FMSs in Somalia have evolved more 'organically', negotiated between clan elites in the region and building on pre-existing administrative as well as clan structures. For this reason, the Somali approach was referred to by many respondents as 'bottom-up' statebuilding.

In Somalia, as in other decentralised contexts, the creation of new formal institutions at the sub-national level has in many cases simply reproduced national-level competition at a sub-national level, played out over territory and control of resources. It has also led to new conflicts over sub-national political office and, in Somalia's case, to the further politicisation of clan structures.

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Decentralisation in general, and federalisation in particular, is a hugely costly and logistically demanding undertaking, requiring a massive amount of resources (finance and capacity) targeting national, sub-national and local institutional infrastructure. Somalia, with one of the lowest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita rates in the world,<sup>169</sup> is therefore dependent upon additional injections of foreign aid to support federalisation, on top of existing aid (and diaspora remittances) to the country for development and security. However necessary, this has the effect of increasing incentives for competition both between politicians at the federal level and between the FMSs and the FGS. Issues of decentralisation absorb political energy and attention, obscuring urgent concerns of poor security, justice and service provision, as well as generating new conflicts and contestation over access to resources. However, for Somalia, the question is no longer about if federalism is suitable, but how it can be applied to meet the needs and concerns of its citizens.

## 5.2 Lessons from Galmudug

In the case of Galmudug state, it is evident that federalisation has evolved through a series of contradictions – or perhaps necessary ambiguities. The pros and cons of federalisation in Galmudug are evident in a number of ways: administrative structures have developed that can, in theory, bring services closer to people, but which are reliant on various other non-state authorities and bodies to do so. A political framework was agreed that gives unprecedented representation to all of Galmudug's clans but which also reinforces social barriers for women, minority clans and young people. And while the structures and processes of federalism have been built from 'the ground up', solidified in existing clan customary institutions and hierarchies, its procedures, mandates and processes are entangled in ambiguity and opacity. While federalism has fostered greater consensus building between clans, it has also aggravated existing and new forms of conflict.

### 5.2.1 Security and justice

The decrease in large-scale insecurity and inter-clan violence across Galmudug's constituent districts has had positive impacts on people's safety and mobility, and on access to employment and education – particularly access to education for women and girls. Yet customary clan structures are the main security and justice mechanisms, and elders are at the centre of most small-scale dispute resolution. The elders work with, or instead of, district and Galmudug state police forces and courts to adjudicate on everyday disputes and enforce decisions according to *Xeer* principles, which can overlook some forms of harm and inequality. And while Galmudug has a greater number of state forces than any other FMS, the security strategy is ill-equipped to unify around a common security purpose and address people's security concerns. This is not because of capacity or the size of its forces, but rather due to its primary focus on al-Shabaab and the political distraction of internal divisions and FGS tensions. Security arrangements – and international support for them – need to better account for the full reality of the federalism process at national and FMS levels.

## 5.2.2 Service provision

Federalisation has led to the creation of administrative structures that have the potential to bring services, such as passport and trade licence processing, closer to people by making them available at the district level. However, for many services such as health, water and education, the FMS is reliant on various other authorities and bodies to provide them. Where they are available, multiple overlapping bodies and institutions – including informal clan structures and the private sector – play a major role in delivering services, undermining the expectation that federalism strengthens state-citizen relations through the development of effective state institutions.

District administrations and councils – which are at the most proximate level to communities – are only present in four out of ten districts, and private companies and NGOs are heavily involved in the provision of water, communications and healthcare. People still look to their clan to provide secure resources and employment, either by holding political office or through relations with private companies and NGOs. In Somalia, an individual has a social contract with their clan, not the government. Accountability between ‘state’ and ‘citizen’ is therefore mediated by the clan at every turn.

## 5.2.3 Political inclusion

Assessing ‘inclusion’ in the emerging federal state of Galmudug is not straightforward. Inclusion in the Somali context is firmly linked to and generally understood as whether a member of a person’s clan is able to participate in a meeting or conference, is allocated seats in institutions, or is able to derive benefit from the system for the clan. In this sense, the creation of federal institutions has expanded the arena for political inclusion. The 4.5 formula ensures that the major clan groups, as well as minority clans, have political representation; this accommodation of clan interests reduces the potential for destabilising the system. Where it has deviated from this – with the incorporation of the supposedly non-clan-based armed group ASWJ – protracted political wrangling and instability have ensued, raising questions about the sustainability of the political pact. The political stability of this ‘elite’ bargain, involving clans and their elders but also including a newer political elite with access to resources, has however been at the expense of other sections of society, limiting the possibility for their inclusion in the federal project.

Looking at other dimensions of inclusion, quotas (yet to be formally legalised) have been put in place to ensure women can compete for and hold political positions at every level of government, including in the FMS. Though rare, IDPs can find ‘advantages’ in clan power-sharing arrangements if they move into an area where their clan is already a majority. Yet the process of electing political representatives, which relies on and replicates clan hierarchies, sets a ceiling on the political representation of women and minorities, as well as IDPs and young people. They face higher barriers to entry, and lack the access to resources or influence that older men and those from larger, wealthier and more established clans have, with women seen as a ‘risky choice’ for a political (clan) representative. Political participation for women, minorities and young people is more achievable at the (lower authority) district level, as is scope for civil society advocacy. The women’s shadow parliament is a promising development but the ability to assert influence over decision-making is vulnerable to co-option by powerholders – such as clans elders and politicians.

## 5.2.4 Consensus and contestation

While Galmudug might be described as the most physically secure FMS, it is perhaps the most unstable politically. It could be argued that Galmudug’s state formation process and subsequent power-sharing agreement was built on an ‘inclusive enough’ coalition which successfully led to the creation of a FMS, secured the buy-in of major powerholders (clans), and provided sufficient incentives to ensure those clans remain committed to the federal framework. In common with other political systems, certain ‘minor’ groups have been excluded to stabilise the inclusion of the major players.

Yet consensus building and the decline in conflict between Galmudug’s major clans have also been accompanied by the emergence of new clan conflicts over land and territory. The wealth and influence that newly available political positions offer – both personal and for clan benefit – have seen sub-clans competing to assert control of an area as a way to claim political representation. Because clan elders and structures play an important role in selecting politicians, another consequence has been the monetisation and politicisation of clan structures. As clans form the foundation of Somali social, cultural and economic activity, the potential ramifications require further research.

The incorporation of the non-state armed group ASWJ, which was negotiated directly between the group and President Xaaf, also ruptured clan consensus building within the state formation

process, with immediate impacts on the subsequent development of Galmudug. With major clan powerholders essentially left out of the negotiation process, the benefit of consolidating a more territorially congruent Galmudug state has been overshadowed by the emergence of tensions between centres of power, namely Dhusamareeb, Adaado, Galka'yo and Mogadishu. This fragmentation of political authority, along with the exacerbation of clan tensions and periodic fighting between different armed forces, has essentially stalled the conduct of politics and parliamentary decision-making. International interventions have sought to address this by making resources and technical expertise available to support one-off dialogues between powerholders, but this can compound other tensions between the FMS and the FGS, as well as internal divisions.

While Galmudug state is merely four years old, it is evident that state formation is an ongoing process that demands re-negotiation and dialogue between different powerholders. At the date of publication (June 2020), there are suggestions that the recognition afforded by the former Galmudug president to the present incumbent has prompted a uniting of interests among the HabarGidr clan – with implications for relations with the FGS and with other clans in Galmudug.

### 5.2.5 Structure and ambiguity

While grounded in the structure and certainty of clan customary institutions, federalism in Somalia has developed in an ad hoc fashion. The formation of Galmudug from 1.5 regions (rather than two) suggests an approach of expediency over consistency. There are inconsistencies in constitutional principles and practice, reflecting a lack of clarity on how FMSs should be formed; how boundaries should be adjudicated; the different roles, mandates and powers of the FMSs compared to the FGS; how revenue and natural resources will be shared, as well as fiscal allocation; and the redistribution of donor funds and security assistance. Where bodies have been created, they lack support from the FGS to function effectively – for example, the Boundary Commission was set up to adjudicate on boundaries but has few powers to implement its mandate.

This reflects the ad hoc nature of the consensus-building approach, allowing powerholders within each FMS to negotiate their own terms for power-sharing according to clan size and influence within the region. The new FMS structures build on the institutions of previous administrations, such as those of Himan and Heeb, and on clan security and justice mechanisms, including clan militias. Yet without formal rules on how federalism is to be implemented and assessed, ambiguity has quickly turned to antagonism, particularly between the FGS and FMSs. The FGS lacks the political strength and confidence to be either a neutral arbitrator of disputes or to refrain from interfering in FMS politics to consolidate its own position.

## Notes

- 168 There has been no official statement on whether parliamentary elections planned for the last quarter of 2020 and presidential elections for early 2021 will go ahead as planned before the current administration's term is due to end on 8 February 2021.
- 169 The African Development Bank and The World Bank estimate that in 2017–2019, poverty incidence in Somalia was 69.4 per cent and per capita income was approximately \$315 per annum. African Development Bank Group, 'Somalia Economic Outlook' (<https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-east-africa-somalia/somalia-economic-outlook>); The World Bank, 'GDP per capita (current US\$) - Somalia' (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=SO>)

# Annex 1: Research methodology

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**This report is based on primary research conducted in Galmudug region and Mogadishu from January to May 2019. It was accompanied by a literature review on decentralisation, and specifically federalism, as a form of conflict resolution. It also reviewed the experience of federalism to date in Somalia, including political and legal developments and peacebuilding interventions related to federalism in the country. This allowed the research team to identify gaps in knowledge and relevant themes, areas and locations to focus on.**

## **Case study selection**

Security concerns in the country were naturally a core consideration when selecting research locations, as was existing or previous research on federalism. For example, initially HirShabelle state was considered as a research location, but the literature review revealed that research on federalism and inclusion had recently been conducted there. Another option, South West state, was eliminated because of security conditions and access challenges. Galmudug region is contextually significant and relevant for a number of reasons. It is unique in that it is a fault line of major clan-family boundaries. It also has one of the highest concentrations of IDPs in the country after Mogadishu, most of whom have come from areas controlled by al-Shabaab in the south. Some of these IDPs have lived in the region for over 20 years, but their different clan identity has meant they lack political or clan representation – raising important questions about inclusion. The state has also accommodated an armed group, Ahlu Sunnah Wal’Jamaa, into its political structure. Despite Galmudug sometimes being seen as a ‘marginal’ region in terms of geography and resources, it therefore has considerable social, political and security significance in Somalia.

Saferworld does not currently work in Galmudug, and in line with the organisation’s peacebuilding approaches we identified and worked closely with a Galmudug-based NGO (who requested anonymity) to develop the research methodology and tools. Their guidance was particularly valuable for understanding how to incorporate questions on gender in indirect ways; frame politically sensitive questions on federalism; practically organise focus group discussions (FGDs) with different groups; and identify and navigate the cultural dimensions of group dynamics. Reflective practice included pre-testing the research questions with staff from the Galmudug-based NGO and with a small sample of

participants. Researchers also kept a ‘learning diary’ during the data collection phase, in which they could note down what went well and what did not during each interview, in order to discuss this with the rest of the team and make any necessary adjustments on subsequent days.

### Research questions

The overall research questions were:

- In what ways have new federal structures promoted inclusion (of major and minor clans and of different marginalised social groups) in Galmudug federal member state?
- In what ways have these structures affected violence, conflict and security?
- What are blockages to federalism supporting greater inclusion?

### Research locations

Primary research was conducted in five locations – Adaado, Dhusamareeb, Abudwaaq, Galka’yo South and Heraale towns – and included in-depth one-to-one interviews and FGDs. Due to security concerns, research locations were limited to urban centres rather than rural areas.

Participants included district administration officials, clan elders, members of the Galmudug parliament, IDPs, and religious and business individuals from both dominant and minority clans. This included men, women and youth (young men and young women). FGDs consisted of single identity groups only – women, men, youth and IDPs – to allow people to more openly discuss issues in a safe environment. Approximately seven FGDs were conducted in each location: one for men; one for women; one bringing together elders; separate groups focusing on the relevant minority clan and IDP group (if present) in each location; and separate groups for young men and women. The total number of respondents for one-to-one interviews was approximately 75, and in total 30 FGDs were conducted, each one with about eight people. The total number of FGD respondents was approximately 220. Overall, respondents were approximately 35 to 40 per cent women and 60 to 65 per cent men.

### Sample size and considerations

With Galmudug’s population estimated at 2.5 million, our sample size was small. Conducting fieldwork in Somalia is considerably challenging, with huge security and ethical risks for participants and researchers, and involves extensive and thorough planning and logistical arrangements. Galmudug is especially complicated given the divided administration that exists between Dhusamareeb and Adaado, and the recurring tensions in divided Galka’yo. In order to gain a

representative sample across the different districts, care was taken to ensure different social groups were approached, and that the sampling approach was uniform in all the sites. The study adopted a mixed complementary approach to sampling. This included the use of purposive and snowball sampling techniques, due to the clan dynamics of the target social groups, the contextual variation of the area, and the need for categorisation of the study respondents across age, gender, occupation and level of education. This approach offered a reliable method for accessing a fairly representative sample of the population of interest.

### Validation

Validation activities took place in January 2020, as it was only possible to conduct them after Galmudug’s regional elections had taken place, due to insecurity and because of election processes taking up people’s time. The team initially planned to hold a validation workshop in Galmudug state; however, because of security and logistical challenges, this was done in Mogadishu. A total of 14 participants (comprising four clan elders, three women, two religious leaders, four young people and one business person) from Heraale, Abudwaaq, Dhusamareeb, Adaado and Galka’yo South attended the two-day meeting. Three of the participants were transported from the region, while 11 of them were already present in Mogadishu.

The exercise sought to share the main findings from the study with respective clans and social groups from the areas where the data was collected, as well as get their feedback with a view to verifying the analysis and the accuracy of the data, and to fill any gaps in the analysis.

### Research ethics

Research ethics were of core consideration, particularly issues of security and safety – for research participants as well as the researchers – and especially so given increasing political tensions in the region as elections loomed. As well as careful consideration of physical security, care was also taken to ensure data was stored securely to maintain confidentiality. As described earlier, ensuring the experiences of different groups – minority clans, men, women, IDPs and youth – were included was considered when planning the FGDs. One-to-one interviews were also conducted with women community leaders and politicians. Given the widespread perceptions many men and women in Somalia have – in particular those supportive of traditional power structures – that ‘outsiders’ bring in a gender agenda, we avoided the use of gender terms that, while familiar in northern development contexts and discourse, may be jarring and unfamiliar in Somalia.

## About Saferworld

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity. We are a not-for-profit organisation working in 12 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

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