

**INCLUSIVE BUT UNEQUAL: THE ENIGMA OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> SNRC  
AND THE FOUR-POINT-FIVE (4.5) FACTOR**

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*Lose the support and dedication of the people, and you lose all possibilities for building the community and the nation.*  
– Mohamed Eno

**Introduction**

After about 13 futile national peace and reconciliation conferences, the regional member states of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), with assistance from well wishers of the international community, considered yet another attempt to convene a Somali conference [2002], the objective of which was to reconcile that country's communities and overcome the curse of statelessness. It was a poor decision because there was no credible authority to tackle the insecurity, illegal migration and other social evils the region was experiencing – from the smuggling of illegal arms and narcotics (Adan, 2003), and trafficking of illegal immigrants (human cargo), to the fighting in Somalia of "Proxy wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea" (Farah, Hussein, and Lind, 2002) – as a consequence of Somalia's lawlessness.

These ills and evils being the realities in the region, compounded by disaffection with the Arte initiative of Djibouti (which raised Abdikassim Salad to power in 2000, Ethiopia's multidimensional campaigning for the convention of the conference and its ensuing multifaceted manoeuvring and manipulation of proceedings in Eldoret and Mbagathi were discernible. The effort regarding the convention of the conference was a compliment to the IGAD Council of Ministers, who charged the Frontline States of Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya to jointly plan and organize the conference, and Kenya was to be the host.

**Ills of an Amorphous Conference**

The flow of the arriving contingents of delegates escalated commotion and crises that persistently haunted the receptionists and the organizers alike, especially in

the provision of accommodation and catering. Within a short period, the number of the delegates sprouted up from the “official” 400 or so participants to a soaring 800, most of whom were equipped with official invitation letters. As one delegate remarked, “Participation has become for purchase.”

Within the first three days or so, it appeared that the majority of the participants in IGAD’s original list had most likely been selected on terms of “who is for” and “who is against” a certain frontline State. Another mystery was how certain names got onto the list, while others were sinisterly expunged from it. It seemed there were no proper criteria used in the selection of the delegates to the various categories of participation. An example of this is the civil society category, which consisted of participants from diverse walks of life, from former warlords and war financiers to former ministers in Barre’s failed regime.

“Mafia-like gangs and syndicates” were colluding with officials of the IGAD Technical Committee in garnering support of one kind or another. As Elijah Mwangale, the first Chairman of the IGAD Technical Committee of the Frontline, once admitted in a plenary, “a lot of things are going on. Dollars have reached even my doorstep.” It was an open secret that collusions and business transactions were looming in the corridors of the hotels and offices; every financially capable warlord or prominent personality of a clan or sub-clan bought their way through to the inner circles of the Conference in order to defend their interests.

Uganda’s president, Yoweri K. Museveni, once a warlord himself, referred to the conference as a “...long and torturous process...” short of mentioning that it was due to collective foul-play by IGAD, representatives of the international community as well as members of the Somali delegates all played a part in the undesirable circumstances leading to the prolongation of the process as an amorphous exercise. It was even more torturous to the oppressed, unarmed communities like the Jareer and the outcasts who were denied social or human equality in the eyes of the international community.

There were no proper instructions to inform the participants beforehand about what meetings to attend and in which hall. Most of the meetings were arranged in a humdrum state, either following short notice or, in most cases, communicating to the delegates overnight through the bulletin board in the Sirikwa Hotel, which accommodated the offices of the IGAD Technical Committee and a section of the delegates. The other participants, who were lodged elsewhere, had to be informed by a friend or find out about events if chance brought them to Sirikwa the following morning.

In the course of the exercise, especially in the early stages, each member of the TC focused on a specific area of interest. Ethiopia focused its effort on recruiting a formidable group to subscribe to its policy toward Somalia in order to secure a

large number of votes for its preferred candidate in the event of the presidential election. Commenting on this, Samatar and Samatar (2003) remarked, "Ethiopia and allies continued to try to gerrymander both the composition and quantity of the delegates." Adan Mohamed's statement comes in clear support of Samatar and Samatar as he writes, "The latest center of dispute was the claim that Djibouti and Ethiopia were unduly interfering with the talks for their specific interests" (Mohamed, 2002).

Kenya being the host country and seeing its partners' undiplomatic attitude, focused its attention on the misappropriation of funds by entering into dubious business deals with the hoteliers and transporters of the delegates. As the local media later reported, unscrupulous agreements were signed and fattened bills and invoices were concocted and paid for, eventually leading to shame and scandal prompting donors' reaction and displeasure. The scandal was assuaged in diplomatic corridors and through the replacement of the chairman and part of his team, ushering in the appointment of career diplomat ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat. Subsequently, the conference was moved from Eldoret to Mbagathi, on the outskirts of Nairobi, marking the completion of the Six Committee work deliberated on in the Second Phase.

Djibouti, the mentor and host of the 13<sup>th</sup> Somali National Peace Conference project, which groomed Abdikassim Salad for the presidency after a 4-month long meeting in the town of Arte, was also playing soft and shadowy diplomacy in its quest to help reinstall Salad, but not as openly or as visibly as their rival Ethiopia.

### **Deficiencies Disdained**

The shifting of the conference to Mbagathi, Nairobi, envisaged a strategic move to reflect a shift in significance, following regime change in Kenya. Another viable reason was, according to the newly appointed Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, "...to change the image of the conference and give it wider and positive media coverage." True to his word, the conference was in a desperate need of a good samaritan the nature of events in Eldoret were deplorable, comparable only to the routine activities in the lawless Bakaraha Market.

Although Kiplagat's scheme to minimize the cost of the conference and improve its image could be commendably attributed to both his professionalism and good intentions, he couldn't save himself from falling into Ethiopia's trap of manipulations. In his lenient manner he once indicated to the Harmonization Committee that, "...whatever the case, I want to keep Ethiopia on board."

Perhaps he did not consider at the time how costly it was to keep Ethiopia on board.

Furthermore, Ambassador Kiplagat's long career in the diplomatic and international relations arenas proved short when he could not persuade or convince Ethiopia to appoint professional reconciliators/mediators who could apply a meaningful, ethics-based, unbiased and actual form of reconciliation. After the commotion and complains became unbearable, it was no longer a secret as a Nairobi-based daily reported that, "Critics have accused the moderators in the Nairobi talks of concentrating more on power-sharing than reconciling the various factions" (Karoney, 2003). Obviously, the agenda IGAD had put in place was about power-sharing. Deficiency from the lack of reconciliatory measures ripped off all the institutions in the conference without sparing the well-respected Somali primates.

The Somali clerics arrived, already split into factions (or sects?): Babu-Sufi, Islah, Itihad, Ahlul-Sunna Wal-Jama'a, etc. They criticized and frequently called each other names, behavior which does not augur well with objective reconciliation. Astonishingly, in the opening sessions of the meetings, especially in the plenary and civil society gatherings, the clerics were at the forefront reciting verses from the Holy Qur'an; they supplicated and advised the delegates to maintain unity and Somaliness. But when it came to manipulation and nomination to committees, they would put the Holy Book aside and settle their differences the temperamental Somali way before returning to the verses and traditions.

At a glance, a disparity arises between the misleading 4-word title or theme, 'Somali National Reconciliation Conference,' and the actual occurrences that prevailed in the course of the conference, especially when taken into consideration the points elaborated below.

Owing to massive foreign domination and manipulation under the umbrella of IGAD, the conference was not Somali-driven. Worse, it was contrary to the original concept which reads: "The IGAD Council of Ministers emphasized that the Somali Peace Process should be Somali-owned and Somali-driven".<sup>1</sup> In his words, chairman Mwangale confirmed IGAD's role by retorting, "The approach of the Frontline States is not to prescribe solutions but create a basis for dialogue," though unfortunately, it remains common knowledge that no dialogue for reconciliation has taken place. Instead, as Hussein Aided emotionally stated on a local TV, "The whole process is driven by circulars of instructive statements," and that the IGAD TC should remain "...as facilitators, not as managers," which portrays the hoodwink and twist administered on the

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<sup>1</sup> See "Somali National Reconciliation Conference" at [www.somali-civilsociety.org](http://www.somali-civilsociety.org)

initial guidelines given by the IGAD Council of Ministers. Aideed even went further, censuring the IGAD Frontline States as people who have "...neither will nor desire to continue the conference."

A major stakeholder and part and parcel of the Union of the Republic of Somalia, the administration of the Northern brothers was not officially present. Many farsighted Somali delegates and notables reiterated the necessity of Somaliland to the conference. Though earlier reports confirm IGAD's willingness to bring Somaliland on board, it was later undermined. According to the initial proposal,

The Ministers re-affirmed a need to invite Somaliland to the conference and requested the TC makes efforts to invite Somaliland to attend the conference. They however recognized that Somaliland is not to be equated with factions and that the invitation to Somaliland be worded differently from that of other Somali parties (Somali Civil Society, see website at the foot of the page)

Sheer reluctance and a hidden agenda on the part of the IGAD Frontline States kept the conference from being nationalized. The controversial case surrounding Somaliland's participation suggests that the invitation was probably withheld as a last resort 'lucky-card' to be used for subversive bargains for the future gains of a particular member state of the IGAD Technical Committee.

(c) Because the Conference began with the factional philosophy of gaining numerical supremacy of participants, which overshadowed all other sectors of the proceedings, and consequently ended with the same, there was no reconciliation, convened or achieved, worthy of mention. Professor Abdi I. Samatar (2003) issued a clear comment on the episode in a workshop in Nairobi, affirming, "We had facilitators, not reconciliators."

In the 2-year life span of the conference, neither the organizers (IGAD) nor the donors fulfilled requirements of reconciliation necessary to put on track a society so divided and disgruntled along tribal lines, polarized by centuries of feuding vendetta that funnelled xenophobia impregnated with hatred and antagonism.

(d) Although it was dubbed a conference, the proceedings of the gathering left a lot to be desired to call it one. The lack of a workable day-to-day agenda, the delegates being locked out of their rooms, denied meals on several occasions for delay or lack of payment, the pulling out of several of the warlords, the settlement of conference-related disagreements on wars inside the country in contravention of a cease-fire agreement<sup>21</sup> undertaken at the early stage of the conference and signed by all the warlords and faction leaders, and the

contemporaneous dissonances and dissensions within the midst of the IGAD Frontline States, all provide us with a sober contemplation that the Somali Reconciliation Conference, despite the thematic title, was derailed from the course expected of such an exhausting and expensive meeting.

On the other hand, while not entirely disagreeing with Abdi I. Samatar's statement that IGAD was a facilitator and not a reconciliator, because the frontline countries preferred to be seen as such, my own experience and observation as an official participant reveals more than that. In a broad spectrum, "Facilitation is the process of helping a group complete a task, solve a problem or come to agreement to the mutual satisfaction of the participants" (Kelsey & Plumb, 1999:7). Facilitation, in this paradigm, requires some tools and skills, which are essential to equip the facilitator so that he/she is aware of the process' multiple implications. Secondly, considering the importance of the conference and its input in human and material resources and the aspirations entwined in the intrinsic national morale, IGAD should have foreseen the prerequisite for professional facilitators and mediators to manage and consult the proceedings of the conference to attain the desired goals.

From day one, the Frontline States have compromised the traditional principles of facilitation. By this, I mean to note that IGAD's role during the two-year long process of the Conference was in no way focused on the tradition of "what would serve the group best?" (ibid), but rather what would best serve an individual faction subscribing to a particular member of the Frontline States and its interests. As such, the true qualities for the achievement of effective facilitation were lacking in their totality. Rather than act as pure facilitators, certain members of the IGAD Technical Committee and other 'friendly' countries misconceived their role, putting themselves in rivalry with each other and again with the disputing Somali factions. Practically, the nature of gerrymandering has made IGAD another stakeholder in the status of a faction, facilitating their own participation in multiple roles, maneuvering and manipulating the proceedings and influencing the decisions. Obviously there is a bulk of evidence to support their biases against certain factions and individual participants, while at the same time serving as consultants to the opposing rivals. Copies of complaints to the Technical Committee and press reports suggest persistent anomalies of bias and ring-leadership (Karoney, 2003).

### **Extrinsic Moral Integrity versus Intrinsic Moral Hypocrisy**

Upon completion of the First Phase, marred by complaints, irregularities and confusion, Six Committees were formed to discuss, deliberate and report on respective areas of important national interest. Of these, Committee One,

charged with the task of drafting a Provisional Charter, split into two sub-groups. The Committee, which included heavyweights in the legal profession, failed to consent on three issues:

- a. Classification, interpretation and acquisition of citizenship.
- b. Adoption of the Federal system of governance.
- c. Adoption of the national language.

In brief analysis, Group A was in favor of the defunct theory of Greater Somalia, according to which, Somalis born in the periphery of the Somali Republic – born in Kenya's Northeastern Province (formerly N.F.D – Northern Frontier District), Ogaden in Ethiopia (which makes the part called Zone Five) and Djibouti (former French Somaliland) – would enjoy equal citizenship rights and status with Somalis born in the Republic. The rival subgroup B was against this idea, as those Somalis make up a constituent part of other jurisdictions, which are independent sovereign states in which ethnic Somalis hold cabinet as well as top decision-making positions.

The other contentious issue was the language. Group A preferred Arabic to be on equal footing and importance with Somali Maxaatiri as an official language, an issue which does not reflect a proper societal justification except on interest basis to please the Arab League countries. Group B had a case to press for Maay language, which is spoken as a mother tongue and lingua franca in almost all the Southern regions of the country, rather than the importation and imposition of Arabic, a language that is alien to the Somali people.

Group B, the Digil-Mirifle proponents of the Federal system of governance, had a long dream for Federalism that was rooted in colonial days, when the political leaders of the community unequivocally expressed their sentiment to delegates from the Four Power Commission visiting Somalia for opinion-gathering and fact-finding mission regarding the UN Trusteeship and subsequent independence. Touval visits the federalism political ideology of the Digil-Mirifle:

On the question of the constitutional form of the proposed union, however, the H.D.M.S. (Hizbi Democratic Mustaqal Somali) retained a distinct point of view, advocating for a federal constitution for the future Somali state. This position was reiterated in 1958 when Jelani Sheikh bin Sheikh, at that time the party president, said in a speech to the party convention that the party has become convinced that the only method of unifying the Somalis...is through a federal constitution which accords full regional autonomy (Touval, 1963:96-97).

Touval brings to our attention another community/political leader, Sheikh Abdullah, then the party president, who when asked by the Soviet member whether “he is not interested in the political activities of the country,” replied, “I have only interest in the Digil Mirifle.” In answer to another query, he stated, “When we asked for the trusteeship, we only meant for the country where the Digil Mirifle live, not the rest of the country. We do not mean the rest of Somalia” (ibid).

The controversial division of the Charter Committee into two polar sub-groups is historically laden in the pre-independence political philosophies. Group A, therefore, stood for the reminiscent ideology of the SYL, whose members were opponents of the federal system, with a tendency for a centralized unitary system of government and a Greater Somalia ideology, which Hussein Ali Dualeh (2002) claims “died a natural death” when Djibouti declined to join the Somali Republic upon attainment of independence in 1977. In any case, one year preceding independence, July 1959, then Prime Minister Abdullahi Issa was quoted as saying:

In the interest of union among the Somali and in the interest of the very safeguarding of the Nation, the Government herewith declares that it does not pursue any regionalist or federalist goal, because unity alone can ensure the durable existence of a Somali national life (quoted in Touval, 1963:97).

These two faculties of thought had a hard political tussle for over 12 months, a scenario which on several intermittent occasions brought the Conference onto the verge of collapse. To save the situation, an arbitration committee, various harmonization committees and a retreat session were established as approaches toward a solution, but the contention was solid. Eventually, a harmonized Charter was agreed upon. The Digil-Mirifle won the day, particularly with the adoption of two key elements: 1) Maay-Maay as an official super-ordinate language parallel with its Maxaatiri counterpart, and 2) Federalism as the administrative political ideology of a Federal Somali Republic.

### **Maay and Maxaatiri Languages: as Equal as Distinct**

In another dynamic socio-political turn-around, the Digil-Mirifle, traditionally despised for their distance from the location and genealogy of ‘nobility,’ emerged with tremendous victories in the social, military and political domains, achieving respect and recognition they would have never aspired to before taking up arms

and liberating the Reewing land from Aideed's Habar-Gidir sub-clan of the Hawiye clan. After Aideed's defeat and other preceding triumphs over certain Darod sub-clans, the Reewing Resistance Army (RRA) and its community became a robust group to reckon with. In Conferences convened prior to the last two or three meetings, the Digil-Mirifle confederation was not deemed of equal participation and posts as compared to the Dir, Hawiye and Darod, owing to the invasion and subsequent conquest of key areas of their territory by troops of the late Mohamed Farah Aideed.

Understandably, therefore, the adamancy on the Federal system and the official super-ordination of the Maay language were invigorated primarily by the military might that erected the Reewing community as equals, rubbing shoulders with their Samale brethren. Only after ethno-political equality was realized were the other social issues tabled for debate, discussion and consequent approval. All other things being unequal, it would be beyond imagination for the northerly to have lifted the Maay language to official status and equal to the Maxaatiri language adopted as the official national medium in 1972, when the nomadic northerners were at the helm of their dictatorship.

The charter theme drove a precarious wedge between the Maay and certain communities of Maxaa speakers, creating a dreadful standoff and a stalemate that almost disbanded the conference. Thus, the proposal that each group work on its preferential draft charter has enlivened the inspiration of the multi-ethnogenetic Digil-Mirifle confederacy and the will for their political identity through the exercise of their age-old federalism ideology – a prestige in vertical identity mobility by virtue of their language of culture. Among other things, the factors lending a back-up support to the Digil-Mirifle argument were:

(a) Their acquisition of a militia power-base, which made them militarily equal to the other armed militia, and

(b) The logical dilemma of which language qualifies to the status of lingua franca – the vastly spoken local Maay language acquired as first and mother language by communities of native Somalis, or the alien and imported Arabic which has to be learned as a third or foreign language?

Most of the proponents of the mythical monolinguality faculty of thought shied away from responding to this question. The Reewing have used the logicity as a main instrument to push for their case. Eventually, Maay had to be recognized as a national language.

#### **Four Communities and a Mesh of 'Half' of a Community: 4.5**

Notwithstanding the disputations, disparities and disinclination over the subjects mentioned above, both sub-groups of the Charter, including several of the other committees, were inclusively unequivocal about the question of officially legalizing the inequality of the divergent communities of the Somali society, particularly where the stakes related to the Negroid/Jareer. With the exception of the Committee on Economic Recovery, Institutional Building and Resource Management and the Committee on Regional and International Relations, all the other Committees, including the divided two sub-committees on the Charter believed in the 4.5 social inequality system, tutelage of dubious members at the 13<sup>th</sup> Somali Reconciliation Conference held in Arte, Djibouti.

Ironically, the draft reports of these Committees, which were to map out guidelines for the way forward, were decoratively enriched with terms such as “justice,” “equality,” and “rights” not less than thirty times, but were without the morality to consider the controversy within their respective documents, as the infamous 4.5 clan power sharing formula contrarily purported injustice, inequality and the rightlessness of a section of the society. It becomes more deplorable particularly when you consider that some of the proponents of the discriminatory 4.5 phenomenon of Apartheid are personalities with long careers in the legal and jurisprudence professions, some of them and alleged to have participated in the construction of Somalia’s 1960 constitution.

Dissonant to the ethics of their profession and knowledge, they imprudently spearheaded the culture of betrayal and violated the human and civil rights of a section of the society by compromising the preservation of rights and dignity of the people. Somali delegates from all walks of life, without the exclusion of high ranking officers, women, intellectuals, religious leaders, clan leaders, notables, lawyers/advocates, politicians, medical doctors, engineers and representative members of the civil society, were not only unanimously silent about the inexplicable marginalization of the Jareer/Bantu population, but indeed all have firmly advocated for it.

Other “intellectuals” who harmonized several versions of the two disputative Charters have also celebrated the adoption and operationalization of the 4.5 clan power sharing formula ceremoniously as though it were the Holy word of God (Kusow, 2004). Remarkably, it was only after its omission and denunciation by the first official and IGAD appointed Harmonization Committee under the co-Chairmanship of Professor Abdi I. Samatar of the University of Minnesota and Professor Mohamoud Jama of the University of Nairobi, that the figure 4.5 ironically disappeared from the final draft of the Charter, which was enriched with code and content transposed from the Samatar-Jama Harmonization Committee’s version. But the system was effectively in practice as a major

formula for appointments at all levels, and consequently adopted as the basis for clan power-sharing

In order to overshadow the sensitive topic of inequality and injustice, the IGAD Technical Committee, in conjunction with Somali armed clans, embraced the Apartheid method of clan categorization and adopted the dubious term “all inclusive”, betraying to the international community that in actuality, the lacklustre named 14<sup>th</sup> Somali National Reconciliation Conference was devoid of any equality for the Jareer community from day one. Underneath the superfluous “all inclusive” pronouncement was, in many respects, an innate ideology of segregation: “inclusive but unequal.” The context lodges in its underbelly a Jileec modified version of the American racial policy of “separate but equal.”

The clans that share inclusivity as well as equality, irrespective of their internal fission or fusion and recognized as “pure” Somalis by all standards permissible, were classified as Dir, Hawiye, Darod and Digil-Mirifle. Regardless of the geographical and genealogical distance of the other clans from the birthplace of the Somali-Arab contact and origination of Somali nobility, the northerners had to force down their throat the bitter pill of parity with the other armed clans, especially after a show of military power had ousted them from the prestigious Villa Somalia.

After their military supremacy symbolized the removal of Dictator Siad Barre, the Hawiye won the recognition of genealogical mobility, a status whose prerogative to determination previously stayed within the jurisdiction of northern “nobility,” which had stationed itself at the top. But this mobility, according to the ousters of Barre, would render insufficiency without employing an excessive push of downward mobility against the Jareer, so that the status gap, rights and equality between the “very” Somali and the “less” Somali would be as visibly demarcated as it was extensively widened. The Jareer, the Reer Xamar (Banadiri) and the outcaste groups of several sub-groups were lumped together to share half of the equivalent of one “pure” Somali clan’s share, with the highest group garnering less than 0.2 of the envisaged 0.5 allocated to the totality of the “minority” groups.

The concept of 4.5 was designed in Djibouti and effectively implemented during the 13<sup>th</sup> Somali Peace Conference held in Arte under the auspices of Ismail Omar Guelleh’s regime. It was the brainchild of certain Hawiye notables who wanted to exercise supremacy against unarmed communities. Unfortunately, neither Guelleh and his government, nor the so-called civil society stage managing that conference, nor the so-called ‘Cuqaal’ wisdom of the tribes, nor the power-hungry intellectuals cautioned against the ill effects of inequality and discrimination to the image of the Somali society in general, and

the un-Islamic social inferiority status the system would afflict on the concerned discriminated people in particular. To add injury to insult, the participants at the Arte (Djibouti) conference were divided into Somali clans and OTHERS, a term which cut open the deepest hunch of Somali racialisticism and ethnocentrism. In fact, it was in this nihilistic ambiance that Abdikassim Salad's Transitional National Government (TNG) was incepted.

Although South Africa has succeeded in eradicating the Apartheid form of administration, Somalia has embarked on legitimating one in a new phenomenon developed under a pastoral philosophy called the 4.5 clan power sharing formula. The puzzle, however, lies in the avoidance to substantiate the basis for the introduction of the 4.5 system, rather than the goal it is to achieve. But what can be deduced from the system is that the socio-political goal of the so-called 4.5 clan power-sharing system is a clear indication of the Apartheid nature of the Somali society. It is a new device for mental oppression. Its aim is to foster in the Jareer mind the acceptance of socially imposed inferiority in comparison with self-exaltation of the "nobility," suppressing them into a situation that some call "a politically and socially limited life" (Christian Action, undated and accessed in the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi.).

In this system, the Jareer survive under stiffly controlled social and economic segregation, and are associated with chronic disabilities "from the crade to the grave" (ibid). An experiment of this type is probably the testing ground for an eventual introduction of decrees and laws that will constitutionalize "...systematic and quite definite policy of Apartheid," (ibid) leading to the execution of acts such as The Somali Bantu Inferiority Act, The Jareer Re-enslavement Law, The Bantu Education Act (like in South Africa), The Right to the Bantu Land Expropriation Law, the Jareer-Animal Equality Act and many other laws that will enhance the supremacy status of the non-Jareer populace of Somalia, particularly the 'tanned' Arab Somalis, borrowing from the literary fashion molded by Ali Jimale Ahmed (1995).

The 4.5 system is a typical replica and nomadicized version of the defunct South African Apartheid policy, where Black natives were allowed to elect Native Representatives of White-European origin to the houses. In essence, when one limits the political participation of another group, it is nothing but effectively legitimized subjugation. It encourages segregation, which is paradigmatic in racist societies where "Onto the neck of a subject people they daily add a yoke which increases to unbearable limits the strain already caused..." (Christian Action, undated, accessed in the Kenya National Archives, Nairobi).

A large number of Somalis and others who think of Somalia as an egalitarian pastoral democracy may not agree with my contentious coining of Apartheid to

Somali social life, which brings us to define the terminology “Apartheid” as it was put by the natives of where it originated. In Moses Mabhida’s definition, among others:

The word means segregation, discrimination and so-called separate development...The idea of segregation is based on a fallacious theory derived from Calvinistic religion, which is very widespread among the Boer population, who do so far as to claim, on the basis of quotation from the Bible, that the black man was created to be the slave of the white man (Mabhida, 1962:7-8).

An observation of the above definition presents a very rich degree of similitude between the system of segregation and discrimination against the Bantu/Jareer ethnic community in Somalia and those in Apartheid South Africa. The most vivid similarities are (a) the belief in inequality between the different races of Jareer and Jileec, hence Bantu and non-Bantu peoples; and that (b) both dominant groups also base their subjugation and slavery philosophy on theological grounds, Christianity in the South African situation, and of course Islam in the case of Somalia (Val Cismon, 1935:10). Whatever the sphere and magnitude, the common denominator for both situations rests in the exploitation of a self-dignified group against the autochthonous population.

Recent historical fact demonstrates, however, that whereas after national and international condemnations of Apartheid (Somalia being among the anti-Apartheid forces) South Africa has achieved the eventual hand-over of rule to the natives, Somalia has, in retrogressive contrast, shamefully and callously moved onto a legitimating process beginning with the adoption of a 4.5 clan stratification and clan supremacization scheme, abominable evils that are now history in South Africa. The objective of the system is instrumental to the experimentation process through which an ultimately legal Apartheid policy might be formulated and implemented in the Somali peninsula.

The 4.5 mechanism is framed in the context of an erroneous but general myth of clan division, in which all the people are categorically put into significant and insignificant tribal groups. The so-called Somaloid groups (Cushites turned Arabs), the significant tribes, are said to contain 4 ‘major’ clans constituting the separate entities of Hawiye, Darod, Dir and Issak, recognized as being of pure Somaloid blood, excluding the occupational outcast groups that I discussed in another study. Hypothetically, this major-minor clan myth is based on a non-demographically proven but rather count-of-the-thumb imagined and executed by a lustful Somali society.

## **More Retrogress than Reconciliation**

The nature of the Somali conflict is as complex as the citizens themselves are. In that context, it was shortsighted and a grave misconception to treat the multi-layered crisis in the manner of a contemporary war instigated by inequitable distribution of insufficient resources perpetrated by colonial doctrine, and continued afterwards by neocolonialist rulers of civil and military regimes. As Dee Kelsey and Pam Plumb have observed, "Often we jump the gun by trying to solve a conflict before we have identified its roots" (Kesley & Plumb, 1997:20). As Committee Six confirms in their report, "The underlying sources of conflict have their origin in the pre-colonial period" (SNRC report, 2003). Thus, the misapprehension of 'straight-jacketing' Somalia's undoing into a "resources and underdevelopment" dispute, which is believed by even some African Presidents, is in strong contradiction to the scholarly observation of "...the superiority complex of one group over another, mainly based on cultural differences" (Jong, 1999:13) and lays bare another aspect of the root causes of this particular conflict. There is truth in the argument that the divided loyalties were partly provoked by mismanagement, greed, nepotism and ethnocentrism indulged in by those at the helm. It also lures a synchronous combination with other segments and series of cultural predicaments, which trail down the line of Somali social history.

Looking back into the history of Somalia, one may deduce that inter-clan and intra-clan animosities and a living culture of war were the order of the day. As Douglas Collins reminds us, "The Auliahans are fighting the Marehan, the Garre are fighting the Galgail, the Uadan are fighting the Geledi, the Omar Mohamud are fighting the Habr Ghidir and the Shifta are fighting for the hell of it" (Collins, 1960:23). This statement is only one out of many more written about the bellicosity of the Somali people and the depth of the roots of their antagonism against one another.

The Somali antagonists were born into a culture of war, and more often than not, battles fought in rural areas extended to urban towns, executing vengeance on innocent citizens for crimes committed elsewhere by unknown kinsmen. Likewise, minor personal urban grudges shifted to remote villages "away from the law" and bloody wars flared up as a consequence. Looking at the problem only as a conflict over resources was the first mistake, while the lack of expert facilitators and reconciliators supported by expert Somalists (Somalis and foreigners)<sup>43</sup> was another of IGAD's deleterious and premeditated discrepancies. This attitude of one-eyedness has led to the unnecessary prolongation of the Conference and the formation of a government in structure but not in function; eight months after its inception, it has yet to decide the location of its seat,

despite the legitimization of Mogadishu as the capital in the Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic adopted by the Conference.

Months after the formation of the cabinet, Nairobi was still the operational base of the Somali Transitional Federal Government, despite persistent calls from Kenya and the donors for its relocation in Somalia. Only after serious pressure from IGAD and the international community did Ali Gheddi's government relocate to Somalia, namely the agricultural town of Jowhar, about 92 km from Mogadishu and a stronghold of his close kinsman and renowned warlord Mohamed Dhere, who for an unending span was holding the local agrarian people at ransom. In other words, the Transitional Federal Government did not dare set foot and operate in Mogadishu, the national capital, an indication of a socio-political gap between the outcome of the so-called 14<sup>th</sup> SNRC and the aspirations of the masses claimed to have been represented at the Conference. A temporary accommodation of the TFG in Baidoa was not successful either, creating more political bloodshed and ideological distance among the clans. And after arriving in Mogadishu under the protection of Ethiopian troops, the shedding of Somali blood, especially the civilians and the unarmed, has become the order of the day.

Under the pattern of this reality, undermining or absence of discussions to unearth the nitty-gritty of the above social dynamics envisages an acute delusion and that the crux of the matter still remains unattended to during the life of the Conference. The thesis of my argument is supported by incidents that created more havoc than reconciliation, as new factions were formed and others married into coalitions and alliances during the process of reconciliation!

### **The IGAD Factor in the Emergence of New Alliances in the Reconciliation Conference**

1. The Transitional National Government (TNG) split into two: a faction led by then Interim President Abdikassim Salad, and its rival arm called TNG (Asali), which was headed by then Prime Minister Hassan Abshir Farah.

2. What was once a strong alliance comprising 8 factions, well-known as G8 (Group 8), suffered an abrupt political puncture, shrinking its membership to a toothless three, leaving Mohamed Kanyare and Omar Mohamed 'Finish' of the Hawiye clan and Mowlud Ma'ani of the Jareer community bewildered as the stout foundation of their coalition was pulled off its balance.

3. The civil society splintered into two parties spearheaded separately by Asha Hagi Elmi (Hawiye) and Shariff Salah (Digil-Mirifle).

4. The National Salvation Council, which was also an "off-spring" of the 14<sup>th</sup> SNRC in Kenya, was dominated by the Hawiye with the exception of Jama Ali

Jama and Ahmed Omar Jees, who both belong to sub-clans of the Darood clan family.

5. Abdikassim's section of the TNG was also a Hawiye control-zone save one member each from Ortoble, Lelkase and Dhulbahante, all Darood sub-clans, and an insignificant number from other clans.

6. The Jowhar administration of strong man Mohamed Dhere and the Puntland administration (a faction of ex-Colonial Abdullahi Yusuf) made a tactical coalition with the robust Somali Salvation and Reconciliation Council, formed after Artef with strong backing from Ethiopia, to counter-balance and frustrate the Djibouti-backed Abdikassim and his dormant interim government. The two newcomers (Jowhar administration and Puntland) increased the SSRC coalition's subscription to a strong membership of 17 factions.

7. Out of the 25 signatories (including Abdikassim) of the National Salvation Council, 17 factions united into a separately independent coalition. Five of the remaining eight factions, chaired by Abdikassim Salad, Bihi, Muse Sudi, Atto and Barre Hirale, instituted an amalgamation, with Abdikassim Salad's TNG arm standing as the powerhouse. The other three consisted of the factions left aloof after the crumbling of the G8; their leader was Mohamed Kanyare Afrah.

8. A noteworthy elaboration here is that, although the National Salvation Council was composed of 25 groups or signatories, they tolerated differences elsewhere on an interest and ideological basis because 17 of those factions were automatic subscribers to the Abyssinian philosophy and school of thought, while 8 groups were inclined to a Djiboutian school of thought, i.e. TNG thinking.

9. The Digil-Mirifle confederation of communities was also affected, although some of their prominent leaders were cautious and secretive to give an impression of 'neutrality.' However, Sheikh Aden Madobe, Deerow [Note that Deerow was killed in his hometown of Baidoa by a gunman] and Shariff Salah were opined as having a tendency toward the Ethiopian camp. Habsade, a prominent figure in Moallim Madobe's territory, was emitting signals of affiliation with Abdikassim. Ex-Colonel and RRA factional chairman Mohamed Hassan Shati-gadud had a devastating head-on collision with Ethiopia after an RRA splinter group was midwived against him in his own area during the course of the conference. Shati-gadud blamed his former ally, Ethiopia, for masterminding the intra-RRA division at a time when he was in Kenya participating in the reconciliation conference. Later, Sheikh Aden Madobe had to be invited as a faction leader alongside Shati-gadud.

To sum up, there was an overall subscription to a certain member of the IGAD TC that made the whole conference a stage for a recruitment exercise to pledge loyalty to the country. This movement was so huge that even most of the Bantu/Jareer participant groups enrolled their loyalty. The oppressed and

marginalized groups, the “unequals” and/or the “second-class citizens,” in other words, the 0.5 communities, mainly supported the Ethiopian-backed fraternity. Of the three Jareer-Weyne groups, approximately a 2/3 majority was for Ethiopia, as a political tactic to (a) “encounter Mowlud Ma’ani’s treacheries and alliances,” and (b) “...have a strong wall to lean on against Somali antagonism that was continuously frustrating Jareer participation!”

Under this background, Abdullahi Yusuf’s election as President was not a surprise, considering his campaigning from day one of the conference, the political back-patting and blessing he enjoyed from a very strong member of the IGAD Frontline States, his close relation with some of the Hawiye factional leaders and his generosity and ‘open-handedness,’ (thanks to foreign funding). All of these contributed to his majestically projected ascension up the ladder where the Hawiye clan had failed to protagonize in the management of milking Maandeeq.

## **Project 14**

The long, hard and controversy-ridden Somali peace process culminated in the formation of a Transitional Federal Parliament, which elected an interim president. Inauguration, oath-taking and ululation marked the outcome of the conference in spite of its paradoxicality, and Siad Barre’s army colleague ex-Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was crowned as the interim president in October 2004. In the sprawling Eastleigh estate, however, opposing crowds of Hawiye and Darood demonstrated in the streets at night. One group was welcoming the outcome and the other denounced it. It was a near-clash as flying stone-bullets were exchanged before elders moved in immediately and restored tranquility. This inimical emotion was a clear surfacing of the impasse in the underneath of the Somali clan animosity brewing and prevailing over the years, which the ‘Reconciliation’ conference had failed to carry on aboard. My premonition related to this episode is that yet another bad omen awaits Somalia.

A well perceived dialectic chronicling serious criticism opened among certain circles of the Hawiye, depreciating the result of the process as “from Darood to Darood,” adducing that the time, lives and resources devastated in the war to overthrow Barre (a Darood) and its effects over the past decade and half as undeservingly incommensurate with the result. On the other end, the Darood expressed satisfaction and jubilation as they re-established themselves unobtrusively in a position they adore for its prestige, a seat which they have always believed their divine right.

There was a lot more to this conference than meets the eye. Indeed, it continued with an indefinite time limit. Associated with it were colossal funds,

consumed to the tune of millions of U.S. dollars. Therefore, the exercise was a political project of regional as well as international dimensions.

The IGAD Technical Committee of the Frontline States on the one end, and representatives of the international donors on the other, had a load on their back and a duty to implement a project whose end product was anxiously awaited. Wreckage of the conference might have cost certain officials their jobs. Enquiries into the causes of the collapse would have revealed devastating discrepancies and the destinations of monies unaccounted for, which now are covered under the shadow of the visible indicator, the morphological existence of a parliament, an ineffective president and of course a white elephant in the form of cabinet structure to steer the government institutions and their obligations. These remain no more than structures installed for circumvention, which are now in dire perplexity of how and where to commence the required institutional functions expected of a government.

The traumatic pressure at the forethought of the precarious consequences entangled in the demise of the conference preoccupied the officials appointed to manage the 14<sup>th</sup> Project dubbed Somali National Reconciliation Conference. The devastating heat from the abortion of the Conference would have jeopardized the credibility of the entire IGAD membership under whose auspices the international community voluntarily committed enormous amounts of domestically needed resources. In a sense, therefore, the propitiation and appeasement with which the warlords and factional heads were approached every time they pulled out of the conference had an underlying strategic connotation to pre-empt the opening of Pandora's Box.

With no tangible reconciliation eminently undertaken during the two-year period of the Conference, there is no doubt that century-old wounds were left rotting below the visible surface, while 'prestige' Project 14 dealt with only the dressing of the puss saturated on the external. In doing so, IGAD had to create an opportunity to conclude the Project and, again borrowing the words of Ali Jimale Ahmed, "opted for the easy way out" (Ahmed, 1995:140).

### **The International Community**

The international community responded commendably to requests to help curb the debacle the regional countries and the world community was having difficulty coping with as a result of Somalia's anarchy. They responded with an intervention in financial sponsorship for the conference and they lived up to their word in their tolerance for the hefty amounts of funds expended.

Although this was a justified good gesture of human philanthropism, they should have also made sure that the exercise was carried out smoothly, in

accordance with the principles of facilitation, mediation and reconciliation. By doing so, the financial sponsors would have stood in a better position to conduct the monitoring and evaluation of the program according to the successive stages and their outcomes. If anything, they should have provided experts in the divergent areas encompassing the process to steer, consult and advise in the various aspects of the Conference in order to help it follow the fundamental prerequisites for a successful reconciliation.

From an external viewpoint, the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, alias "Project 14," consummated more a game of robotics than it accommodated the true ideals of desirable reconciliation or purposeful politics. Technical and financial blockades have on several occasions pushed the exercise almost to an end. On several occasions, the delegates were abashed and disgraced as hoteliers kicked them out of their hotel rooms in demand of payments for earlier services, accommodation and meals.

Considering the magnitude of the conference, the international community should have taken the responsibility and provided expertise in conference management, mediation and reconciliation methods – in general, the engagement of Somalist scholars with profound erudition of the diversity of the Somali community of nations and their respective cultures was a necessity disdained in the part of the donors. They should have also welcomed and appreciated the expertise of distinguished Somali scholars from both inside the country and the Diaspora so as to allow the interplay between the local and foreign expertise to benefit the conference. Hypocritically, this opportunity was not seized because the intellectuals were elbowed out of active participation, at times mistreated and often disgracefully humiliated, owing to the heavy handedness of an IGAD TC member. The negative attitude toward the Somali scholars' input was premeditated by the Frontline States, who made it their mandate to further deepen the Somali clan hostilities. In fact, intellectual participation was initially limited, and the importance of their presence was eventually withdrawn and ignored altogether. The principled among these scholars have pulled out of the exercise, while others had their role reduced to (*kutuba-qaad*) personal secretaries to the warlords.

With the neglect of these useful factors, the good intentions of the donors have been thwarted by the monopolization and manipulation of IGAD stage-managers. But the donors were not unconscious of the obstructive impasse in the Conference. They received numerous copies of complaints by the factions and individual participants, informing them of the fruitless path of the exercise and the emotions inherent in the intense political climate. This was an inexcusable and unprecedented neglect on their part.

There is no question that the conference has widened the multi-dimensional psychosocial trauma excruciatingly afflicted on the Somali people. The solution, in my opinion, does not lie in the formation of a state, but rather in the creation of a viable reconciliation process in which every person could overcome his or her grief. Competition for resources, identity and cultural supremacy only make way for bias and hatred, factors through which social confianza and societal bonds cannot be enhanced. For Somalia, the way forward is in the restoration of the lost love, in rebuilding trust – regardless of one’s ethnic background – and the preservation of the uncompromisable unity that was once the symbol of the country.

For the 14<sup>th</sup> Somali National Reconciliation Conference, the idea was initiated by IGAD, the conference was managed by IGAD, the ‘facilitator’ was IGAD, and the Interim Somali government was molded by IGAD, yet the officials IGAD delegated to the conference were diplomats with no reconciliation record in their portfolio. This factor is another clear representation of the conundrum that haunted the exercise. If under this reality we ask the question: Has any praiseworthy reconciliation been conducted in the SNRC? The true answer is NO. Reversibly, if we may please ourselves metaphorically with an end product, we can reframe the question to suit our illusive dogma and put it this way: Was a government installed? The answer is YES. Then to the latter response we may ask: why is the government neither functioning nor seated in the national capital if indeed it was born out of an effective reconciliation conference?

As Eno (2005) enlightens, “We have to evaluate the situation in pursuance of what the variable was before the conference and whether the conference as the vehicle has achieved that. If the variable in our search prior to the conference was in the structure of an institution, one was indeed formed; but if it was laid in reconciliation and a functioning institution, veritably this is yet very far from being achieved any time in the near future.” [This argument is clearly true, particularly considering the current Ethiopian occupation of Somalia in support of the TFG but under the guise of fighting international terrorism.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a descriptive reflection on ethnic divisions, social discrimination and marginalization. From the general Somali claims of self-sameness, same culture, same language, etc. and the turbulent squabbles within them, this discussion has led us to the very recent phenomenon of Apartheid coded the “4.5 clan power-sharing formula”. When we scale these hypotheses against the universal belief in Somali homogeneity, monolinguality, monoculturality and monotheologicality, we may be allowed the tendency to

deviate our [past]understanding [as] to deserve it an equal observation of the other version of a more real and realistic Somalia; a Somalia that is multi-ethnic and multicultural. This version exposes us to yet another extensive debate of who is a Somali and by what criteria is the paradigm of Somaliness determined? The ethnic marginalization, segregation and discrimination defined in this study portray the reality that Somalia is a truly ethnocentric racist society (Eno, Ibid.). On the other hand, despite the 4.5 Factor and the grabbing of positions, Somalia literally has no functioning authority. This failure should not be blamed only on the Somalis' unwillingness to manage their affairs; it is also a consequence of a mismanaged and entirely neglected reconciliation conference. Upon its inception, the TFG was not born out of a Somali-driven reconciliation process, thus the lack of the Somali people's blessing. With a foreign-driven process and outcome, the TFG has entirely lost the support and dedication of the masses. The Somali people were left with no more meaningful option than to deny followership to a wicked leadership imposed on them by antagonistic foreign dominators.

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### Acronyms

G8 -- Group 8 is an alliance of eight Somali factions.

HDMS – Hizbi Demoqradi Mustaqal Somali

IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority for Development

NFD -- Northern Frontier District

RRA – Rahaween Resistance Army

SNRC – Somali National Reconciliation Conference

SYL -- Somali Youth League

TC -- Technical Committee

TFG -- Transitional Federal Government

TNG -- Transitional National Government

UN -- United Nations