

# REMITTANCES FOR PEACE?

## THE TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS OF SOMALIS IN NORWAY



*“In today’s world, either you are ‘with us, or against us’.  
In reality, things are not that black and white”.*

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*Report to the Peace & Reconciliation Unit, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

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## Executive Summary

This report highlights the importance of the transnational political engagements of Somalis in Norway, focusing mainly on their financial contributions. Whereas the political role of migrant diasporas has not been given great weight in academia nor in practice, our research demonstrates the crucial role that diaspora contributions can play in conflicts and reconciliation processes. In our view, it is important for the Ministry not to underestimate this contribution, and thus to have a more proactive approach towards diaspora involvement, ultimately aiming at strengthening positive while discouraging negative contributions.

The research took place between June and December 2007, which has had implications for its outcome. Political events in Somalia have a direct impact on positions amongst Somalis in the diaspora, and from mid to late 2006, many events have occurred that have modified political views. It is important to realize that political positioning amongst Somalis is not a static given but experiences constant flux. The issue that has affected political positioning amongst Somalis in 2007 most, is the Ethiopian invasion and its effects on relatives and friends in Somalia that Somalis in Norway are in touch with. This created widespread outrage amongst Somalis, at times enforcing a Somali 'nationalist' attitude. It has also had implications for the ideological support for the current main 'national' actors in the conflict-ridden South: the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

The report highlights the fact that the largest share of financial support for political actors in Somalia, however, does not take place on this more overarching level, but it rather takes place on the (sub-)clan level. Requests for financial contributions in case of conflicts between two sub-clans, or to support reconciliation efforts after such conflicts, may be what attracts most contributions from the largest number of people from a wide variety of backgrounds. One of the reasons for this is that the impact of sending money to the sub-clan level is much more likely to be felt by family members in the region of concern than when the money is sent to overarching political actors like ICU and TFG. An exception to this trend was the large-scale ICU fund raising initiatives in November 2006 to support cleaning campaigns in Mogdishu. This also was seen to have direct benefits to relatives and friends living in the city, and hundreds of Somalis in Norway contributed to it.

Those Somalis who are politically very active in Somalia, are often also politically active in Norway. This can be partly explained by the fact that these are individuals who are inclined to engage in politics and leadership roles in general, irrespective of the issues to take up. It can also be explained by the fact that the local and transnational engagement is often linked: Somalis who for example are active members in political parties in Norway, advocate within these parties for issues in Somalia, while also working on issues of relevance to the position of Somalis in Norway. In general, we found that advocacy and lobbying activities focusing on Norwegian institutions was an important part of political engagements with Somalia. Furthermore, in order to truly understand the political role of the diaspora in Somalia, some of the remittances sent for humanitarian or developmental purposes are also important to consider. These are issues the Ministry could explore further.



## I. Introduction

This report aims to provide insight into the transnational political engagements of Somalis in Norway, and will focus mainly on their financial contributions. We will first provide a background for the study, by briefly outlining the state-of-the-art of current research on political transnationalism; discussing study set-up; and introducing a brief overview of the position of Somalis in Norway. Then, political support levels to which remittances may be geared are discussed, distinguishing between nationalist support; TFG-ICU support; and contributions to conflict and reconciliation on the (sub-)clan level. Thirdly, alternative engagements with political implications will be outlined, such as remittance sending activities that are not directed to overtly political causes and lobbying within Norwegian institutes. As our research was primarily based on indepth interviews with Somali actors themselves, this report includes many quotes that attempt to give a better understanding of the viewpoints and reasoning behind the actions of individuals and groups.

In recent years, there has been a general increase of interest in the transnational political and military activities of individuals and groups outside their country of origin. The fact that there is an increase in interest does not necessarily mean that transnational political organizing is new, and past examples include overseas Chinese in the 1911 Revolution; the Jewish diaspora in the creation of Israel; and the activities of Irish-Americans over time with respect to the conflict in Northern Ireland. These examples illustrate the enormous potential of members of the diaspora in the political transformation of their 'homeland', and this is especially true for refugee diasporas, which are produced by political repression or violent protracted conflict in the home states.

It is very important to recognize that the relationship between refugee diaspora groups and the country of origin is 'as likely to be defined by a desire for transformation, contestation and political change as it is by nostalgia, continuity and tradition' (Adamson 2001: 155). Both the fact that we are dealing with *refugees* and the fact that they are *in diaspora* plays a role. Often, the leadership of the political opposition are amongst those refugees who move further abroad. Political events and conflicts in the country of origin continue to influence and often divide the communities, and political links to the country of origin remain significant. Then, as Wayland (2004: 417) points out, persons who migrate from a closed society to an open society are able to capitalise on newfound freedoms to publish, organise, and accumulate financial resources to an extent that was impossible in the homeland.

Motivated by their experiences and facilitated by broader globalization processes, diasporas play an increasingly important role in conflict and peace processes in their countries of origin. Diasporas adopt different strategies for influencing change in their countries of origin. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003: 70) distinguishes between direct and indirect strategies, where direct refers to transnational activities that are directly

targeted at the countries of origin, and indirect refers to activities that are indirectly targeted at those countries, through other actors. Direct strategies involve giving economic, political or even military support to political counterparts in the homeland, while indirect strategies include lobbying or bringing pressure to bear on the international community. This paper will mainly focus on financial contributions, which is arguably the most widespread and potentially the most decisive activity of those in the wider diaspora.<sup>1</sup> It will also briefly touch on lobbying activities.

Over the last decade or so, interest in the financial contributions of diaspora groups, or remittances, has increased dramatically. There is a general understanding that migrant remittances are vital in an increasing number of national economies worldwide. These substantial amounts are not only interesting because they play a role economically: they are also of great importance because they have the potential to alter the local balance of resources and power. Growing evidence exists that many active, non-state armed organizations are financed by revenues from diaspora communities, with some cases better documented than others, including the LTTE in Sri Lanka and the EPLF in Eritrea.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the ability to raise financial and other resources may be greater for secessionist movements, there are also other cases where diaspora groups contribute financial resources to actors in conflict situations, and the Somali diaspora is a case in point.

In Somalia, remittances have enabled the provision of vital services commonly provided by the state, including education, health care and infrastructure. At the macroeconomic level, the country largely depends on remittances for its functioning. Remittances outweigh export income and ODA in Somalia by far. The UNDP estimated remittances to Somalia to total between USD 700 million and 1 billion in 2004 (Omer et al. 2005), and although estimates are quite rough and vary widely between different sources, it is clear that remittances play a vital role in the country's economy. Because of their economic force, the Somali diaspora has also played a critical role politically; both in peace and reconstruction efforts as well as in supporting various militias involved in the conflict (Marchal 2000; UNDP 2001). Though a number of studies have stated this fact, there is hardly any empirical research to illustrate the processes at play.

### ***1.1 The study***

This report presents the findings of a study on remittance sending practices for political purposes amongst Somalis in Norway. The main aim of this study is to increase our knowledge on the contribution of diaspora communities in Norway to conflict and peace processes in their country of origin, taking the Somali case as a relevant example. Main research questions include which political actors are supported by the Norwegian

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<sup>1</sup> The wider diaspora is contrasted to the nearer diaspora, where other types of support, including military, may play a greater role

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. McDowell (1996), Fuglerud (1999), Cheran (2003), and Wayland (2004) on the LTTE; and Al-Ali et al. (2001) and Koser (2001) on the EPLF.

Somali community and for what reasons; how these remittances are organized; what the remittances are used for; and whether any examples exist of large amounts directly contributing to conflict or peace processes. The study is set up as a pilot study to be expanded at a later phase.<sup>3</sup> As such, qualitative research methods that allow for an indepth exploration into this delicate subject are selected. This report presents findings that increase insight in the processes at play, whereas we know more about the extent to which these processes are widespread or not, only after the main research has taken place.

The main methodological tools for the data collection include a literature review, semi-structured individual interviews, key informant interviews, informal group discussions, and participant observation. The fieldwork was conducted between September and December 2007 through interviews with 20 Somali respondents in Oslo and 8 in East Africa. The reason for selecting Oslo for the main fieldwork was that it is the city where the majority of Norway's immigrant population lives. Likewise, Oslo hosts almost half of the Somali immigrants in Norway. Further, most of those Somalis whom engage transitional political activities are found in Oslo, and their lobbying and advocacy activities concentrate largely on governmental institutions in the capital. In order to triangulate the information provided on these lobbying and advocacy activities, and gain more background information on the government's general activities in relation to Somalia, 5 Norwegian key informants working in or with the MFA were interviewed as well.

For the selection of Somali respondents, multiple snowball sampling and purposive selections were deployed. In order to obtain a sample of informants that would be sufficiently diverse, the selection was done by snowballing through many different entrance points. Then, a few Somali informants in Norway and East Africa were purposively selected to provide specific insights on issues that came up during the semi-structured interviews. These individuals either had detailed knowledge on the specific conflicts that our respondents financially contributed to; or were taking a leading role in some of the transnational political activities that were mentioned by others. Appendix I shows the characteristics of all our respondents in Oslo, indicating a relatively good variation in gender, age, clan, region of origin, year of arrival, citizenship and educational level. There is an overrepresentation in our sample as compared to the larger Somali population of men, the higher educated, those who have been in Norway long and relatedly, those with Norwegian citizenship. All these biases are related to the fact that we selected Somalis who were politically engaged in Somalia one way or the other.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The aim to continue doing research on this subject has been met successfully, as from 1 March 2008, a 3-year collaborative EU-funded project entitled 'Diasporas for Peace. Case studies from the Horn of Africa', will start.

<sup>4</sup> Irrespective of the characteristics of the sample, it is important to note that the sample is far too small to be representative. Rather, the research gives us valuable new insights and allows us to formulate hypotheses that can be tested further at a later stage.

After the informants had been identified they were contacted and the intention of the study was briefly explained. Once an informant had agreed to be interviewed a meeting was arranged. The majority of interviews took place in public spaces where bystanders would not be able to understand the conversation. Two were conducted through telephone. The interviews lasted between half an hour to three hours, with the majority taking around one hour. Each informant was made fully aware that he or she had the right to refuse or withdraw from the interview at any stage, and anonymity was guaranteed to them. The names and other identifiable characteristics of informants were removed as soon as interviews ended, and information was not tape recorded but notes were taken. Although the majority of informants were quite open, a few were suspicious of the aims of the study, and thus avoided going into detail. The interviews were conducted using a general interview guide, with an additional guide developed for the interviews with the key informants. This additional guide was based on the information collected during the first 17 interviews. The reason for interviewing key informants was either to find explanations for data collected or to get more precise data on specific topics.

Besides the interviews, the study also involved a large number of informal discussions with individuals or groups in order to test some of the findings from the study and gain more insight in specific areas. Furthermore, a literature study was conducted on the political involvements of a variety of diaspora groups, to broaden our understanding on the issue. Finally, an Internet search of Somali websites and international news sites providing detailed information on Somalia was conducted. All data collected was then analyzed using NVivo, a software program for qualitative data analysis.

Interviews with Somali respondents in Oslo and Nairobi were conducted by two Somali researchers, with supervision of the principal researcher. This strategy was chosen because of the sensitive nature of the study. During the initial phase of data gathering, these researchers experienced the difficulties of conducting research relating to the political implications of remittances. Doing fieldwork amongst one's own community has both advantages and disadvantages, but conducting interviews at times was painful and frustrating for the researchers. It was difficult for them to engage in two contradictory roles: that of researcher and of member of the community being researched. Although there is a risk in combining these two roles in being too engaged and involved, the researchers strived to present the study results without personal bias. This was achieved by being aware of the personal relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer, and registering these observations in detail in each interview report. Furthermore, the project leader conducted most of the analysis of the interview material, and weekly meetings were scheduled between the project leader and field researcher to discuss potential biases in great detail.

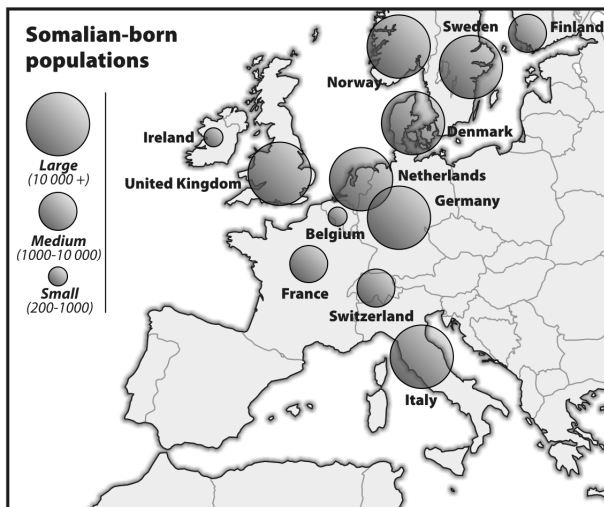


## 1.2 Somalis in Norway

There is a large Somali diaspora with at least one million Somalis living outside their home country, which is considerable, given that the total population is estimated to be between six and nine million. This diaspora is widespread, and Somalis in different host countries have established strong networks and engage in a wide variety of transnational activities, including economic and political ones (see e.g. Al-Sharmani 2006; Horst 2006a; Horst 2006b). This is partly related to the fact that Somalia is still, and has been for the last fifteen years, a non-functioning state. Colonial legacies, the repressiveness of Siyad Barre's regime, the collapse of the state, the civil war, and clan rivalries have all contributed to the destruction of the country's infrastructure and basic amenities. It also resulted in an unprecedented human tragedy of death and displacement. The current political turmoil and its resulting warfare between the TFG and the occupying Ethiopian forces on one side and the various insurgency groups on the other have all exasperated conditions.

Amongst those displaced by events, large numbers sought safety within the country while others fled to the neighboring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. A smaller, yet still considerable, number of Somalis fled further and resettled in Europe, North America, and Australia. In Europe they resettled mainly in the former colonial powers of the UK and Italy; Scandinavian countries; the Netherlands; Germany; France and Switzerland.

Earliest arrivals of Somalis into Norway were seamen with the Norwegian shipping industry in the late 1970s. This pioneering group consisted only of labor migrants and was rather limited in number. They were either single or left their spouses and children at home. Many, though not all, came from Somaliland. The second phase of Somali migration to Norway consisted of refugee arrivals as a consequence of the



political crisis in the North that started in the mid-1980s. Again, the numbers were relatively small and many of these second wave migrants have now moved on from Norway to, for example, the UK. The third phase of Somali migration into Norway was caused by the outbreak of civil war in 1991. These individuals arrived in Norway in three different ways: as quota refugees on specific resettlement programs such as those targeting women at risk, though this number is very small; those who came for family reunion; and those who came as asylum seekers, which is the largest group.

According to the SSB, by January 2006 slightly over 18,000 Somalis were living in Norway, a bit less than half of whom live in Oslo. This made them the 6<sup>th</sup> largest migrant

group in Norway. Somalis constitute one of the largest refugee groups, and the largest group of Africans in the country. There are a number of characteristics that distinguish the Somalis in Norway (see Henriksen 2007). It is a relatively young group consisting of more men than women, and a group that has lived in Norway for a short time, with almost half the Somali population in Norway having arrived within the last five years. Relatively many of the households consist of single parents with children. Somalis are the non-western migrant group with the highest unemployment rates and the lowest income levels, which may be related to their relatively recent arrival. The participation of Somali youth in elections is as high as that of Norwegian youth.

## **2. Political Support Levels**

In order to understand levels of support to political actors in Somalia by Somalis in Norway, it is crucial to realize there are a number of levels on which support can take place. To simplify this, we will here discuss political support activities on three levels: firstly, the 'nationalist' level; secondly, the level of the main actors competing for national dominance; and thirdly, the level of the clan-system. Obviously, these levels are closely interlinked, as clan affiliation for example plays a crucial role in support for a certain national actor. Furthermore, it is important to realize that an individual's allegiance or actual support activities do not remain stable over time but are fluctuating in response to current events and constantly shifting alliances. As such, the timing of the research has been crucial in determining the outcome: many things have happened in Somalia over the past year, and this has greatly affected the political perceptions of Somalis in Norway.

One interesting outcome of the study is that the most widespread types of financial support are provided to political actors on lower levels. Support on national levels is often largely ideological rather than practical. What this means is that most of the Somalis in Norway who contribute remittances for political purposes send this money to their sub-clans rather than to a national actor like the TFG. Below, this will be elaborated further. Although we mainly focus on remittances sent to Somalia in this report, it is important to realize that these remittance sending activities are often accompanied by other transnational activities as well. Somalis in Norway for example try to influence the course of a conflict or the reconciliation process between two (sub-)clans not just by sending money, but also by directly communicating to the key actors on the ground; by issuing press releases; or even by visiting Somalia or sending delegates.

### ***2.1 The Nationalist Stance***

Amongst the 20 Somalis interviewed in Norway, about a third makes remarks that can be interpreted as 'nationalist', and 4 explicitly describe themselves as a nationalist. A definition of what Somali nationalism is and who is included in the Somali nation is not easy to make. President Siyad Barre's nationalist pan-Somali aspirations to unite the Somalis living in five countries in the Horn of Africa were warmly welcomed by many at the time, but currently the Pan-Somali idea for most is seen to be unattainable at best. When those interviewed in Oslo discuss ideas that could be termed 'nationalist', they often refer to the nation without specifying a state. There are two types of national identifications being made: one that focuses on a Somaliness without divisions; and another that is reactive against the perceived threat to the Somali nation-state by external aggressors. At times, those interviewed make a point in indicating how one is closely connected to the other: as a response to external threats like the current Ethiopian invasion, there is a need and potential for Somalis to unite.

Those who declare themselves nationalist in the first sense, stress the harmfulness of internal divisions based on clan or regional differences for Somalis and Somalia. The Somali state has in many ways been a state in constant conflict; not only with surrounding countries but also with its own citizens. One of the basic internal factors of the civil war in Somalia has been identified as the contradiction that has always existed between the clan system and the state (Horst 2006b). Whereas the Somali function within a segmentary lineage system that requires a flexible loyalty, mainly on the level of the *diya*<sup>5</sup>-paying group, there is no such loyalty to the idea of a nation-state, and both systems function according to separate principles of economic, political, military and sociocultural organisation. At the same time, there have certainly been attempts to create a true nation-state, built on the concept of the Somali as one people, but this has never been a project that was carried by support from the larger population (see e.g. Besteman 1996; Brons 2001).

Yusuf Ali<sup>6</sup>, a young father who has been in Norway for almost 15 years now, expresses his principled attitude against the Somali clan system in the following way: “I am nationalistic in a positive way, meaning that I believe all Somalis are equal and every Somali citizen should have the same rights and responsibilities. I just believe in Somaliness, not in clans”. Bishar Hassan, a Somali artist living in Oslo, also claims himself to be nationalist, contrasting his beliefs against regional divisions rather than clan: “I am a man supporting the Somali nation and agree with Hadrawi<sup>7</sup> when he says ‘My wisdom surpasses regional affairs’”.

Whereas these individuals focus on the importance of a ‘nationalist’ attitude in terms of overcoming internal divisions, there are others who make remarks that are guided more by a wish to counter external threats. The large majority of the Somalis interviewed were greatly concerned, and at times outraged, with what was called the Ethiopian invasion or occupation of Somalia and its effects on ordinary people. Halima Osman cynically suggested that the Ethiopian occupation was good for Somalia, and when asked why she thought so, she mentioned that it would force Somalis to unite, agree with each other and protect their own country. Some pointed out the fact that conflicts between Somalia and Ethiopia are centuries old and attack the core of the Somali nation.

Many of those who were very outraged at the presence of Ethiopian forces in Somalia described incidents in which their close relatives were killed, and others discussed the fact that their relatives were displaced by the renewed fighting. Casha Mohamed relates the following story: “My relatives left Mogdishu recently, and two of my cousins stayed behind to guard their house. They were killed by Ethiopians last week in a very ugly way [describes the details], and the family home was destroyed”. Whereas

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<sup>5</sup> Diya (Arabic) means compensational payment.

<sup>6</sup> All names are pseudonyms so as to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

<sup>7</sup> Mohamed Ibrahim Warsame ‘Hadrawi’ is a Somali poet, born in 1943, who was involved in the Somali National Movement (SNM).

the anger and bitterness created by such events and the discourse surrounding them at present mostly do not lead to actions, with none of our respondents reporting remittance sending activities with explicitly nationalist goals, these emotions leave room for easy manipulation and should be taken very seriously.

## ***2.2 Current Main National Players***

Currently, those working on Somalia often refer to three ‘administrative’ sections: South-Central; Somaliland; and Puntland. Main international attention is directed at South-Central, since this is where the largest share of conflicts is concentrated. As such, we will do the same in this section, though in the section below, we will also introduce examples from the North. In South-Central, the main national players are the TFG, and the ICU.

The TFG was established in 2004 after the 14<sup>th</sup> peace talks since 1991 and the Transitional Parliament moved to Somalia in 2006, whereas the ICU evolved as a group of Sharia Courts in the South of Somalia that slowly expanded its influence and was at its peak, challenging the TFG’s authority, in 2006. Late that year, events suddenly took on a new direction when Ethiopian troops, allegedly backed by American forces, entered Somalia to strengthen the TFG’s position. On 27 December 2006, the ICU dissolved itself, surrendering political leadership to clan leaders. As one respondent mentioned, events in 2006 and then 2007, divided Somalis in Norway and elsewhere in three groups that were not simply based on clan loyalty: those who supported the TFG; those who supported the ICU; and those who were uncertain who to side with. Most Somalis have an opinion on the subject, even though at times their opinion changes as events evolve. This section will discuss the level of ideological support for the TFG and ICU we came across amongst our respondents, as well as providing examples of financial contributions made to these national actors by Somalis in Norway.

Amongst the twenty Somalis in Norway we interviewed, there are supporters of the TFG; ICU; Somaliland government and Puntland’s regional government. Furthermore, almost all of those interviewed had clear views on either the TFG or the ICU. Respondents had more or less sophisticated views on the strengths and weaknesses of both, and some indicated the shifts in their own alliance over time.

Nationalist	4
TFG	3
ICU	5
Somaliland Independence	2
Puntland Regional State	1
Clan	1
None	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>

Hassan Ismail, for example, indicated that one year ago, he was very active in his engagements for the TFG. Currently, he is not involved with the transitional institutions at all, because, as he claims, ‘the TFG did not deliver its promises’. Instead, he now mainly supports the Puntland regional government. This is just one example of the often very complex

***Table 1: Primary political support amongst sample***

shifts in alliances that may take place during an individual's life, complicating our understanding of the general trends amongst Somalis in Norway.

### ***2.2.1 TFG Support***

Three of the twenty people we interviewed, indicated their current support for the TFG. The TFG supporters we spoke to all had relatives within the structures or had ambitions themselves to take up a political position in the TFG. Marian Issa, a politically active woman in her fifties, indicates that one of her relatives is holding a high position in the TFG. According to Marian 'he struggles for the rights of minorities in the South, so I advocate for him politically. I mobilise my people to support him and discuss with him and advice him, especially when he is in Europe'. In this way, Marian can affect policies in Somalia from Norway in quite a direct way, contributing to a cause that is very important to her.

Other reasons for supporting the TFG include the general conviction that Somalia needs a strong government that can guide the country away from chaos. Informants stress that Somalia should be governed by elected, mandated people and that this is a step towards peace and stability. One of the people who were supported by the Norwegian government to attend the National Reconciliation Conference also stressed the fact that the TFG needed to be in place in order to counter various types of fundamentalists, and included in his analysis religious, clan-based, as well as greed-driven militants.

Those who oppose the TFG have absolutely no faith in the transitional institutions, including Government and Parliament, for a number of reasons. The ones most often cited are the association of the TFG with the Ethiopian invasion and its consequences for ordinary citizens, and the fact that these institutions do not represent the people. In the words of Omar Dakane 'The TFG is constituted of the same people who destroyed Somalia. They are claiming to be a government for Somalia and its people, even though they are unelected. How can the same people who were wardlords in the past, now represent us as our leaders and reconcile Somalis?'<sup>8</sup>

As the TFG in general does not seem to have a large mass supporting them amongst Somalis in Norway, there are also few indications that large amounts of remittances are being collected on behalf of the TFG. Rather, those individuals who support the TFG aim to influence the Somali political situation through advocacy and

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<sup>8</sup> This is not a sentiment that is restricted only to Somalis in Norway. BBC's 'Have your Say' <http://newsforums.bbc.co.uk/nol/thread.jspa?forumID=3810&edition=2&ttl=20071217133402> on whether Ethiopia should pull out of Somalia, attracted many messages that included negative comments on the TFG. A 2007 report by the International Crisis Group (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4630&l=1>) similarly indicates the fact that the TFG is unpopular amongst Somalis.

lobbying, and financial and other support for the transitional institutions mainly comes from western governments.

Lobbying is done by members of Norwegian political parties trying to influence the party's stance on Somalia. Furthermore, lobbying within relevant sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes place as well, as became clear both from talking to Somali respondents and Norwegian key informants. Since Norway is an active member of the International Contact Group for Somalia (ICG) and through that, in principle supports the transitional structures that have been put in place through the negotiations in Eldoret, this may have more impact than attempts to gain large contributions from the Somali diaspora in Norway; especially with only few Somalis in Norway supporting the TFG in the first place.

### *2.2.2 ICU Support<sup>9</sup>*

This stands in some contrast to the ICU, which has little western backing and is also not seen as a constructive political force by the relevant Norwegian governmental bodies whereas it does seem to have a broader support base amongst sections of the Somali diaspora, including the diaspora in Norway. According to Abdulahi Yasin, who says he does not support any of the political actors currently operating in Somalia, the ICU's support in the diaspora was in fact crucial for its fast expansion and is an example of the powerful potential of Somalis outside Somalia. This support does not only materialize financially, but also through the fact that a number of members of the ICU are from Norway. In our sample, those indicating support were solely from within the Hawiye clan, but from all its sub-clans. Furthermore, in group discussions with members from other clans, it was suggested that not only Somalis from the Hawiye clan support the ICU.

The reasons mentioned for supporting the ICU largely focus on the direct beneficial effects ICU control was seen to have on the lives of relatives and friends in Somalia, in particular Mogadishu, as well as on the consequent hopes for a peaceful future. One informant also indicates the fact that the ICU was based on Islam and Islamic principles of fairness, but beyond this comment, referrals to religion are largely absent. The ICU, in the relatively short period of its control in 2006, was seen to have restored security and normality in Mogadishu and beyond, as well as uniting Somalis beyond clan lines. Sadio Mahat, a politically engaged woman who has been in Norway since the early 1990s, describes the general feeling very well: "The ICU restored peace in Mogadishu after 17 years of conflicts. My mother and father lived there and got security at that time; people had food and slept peacefully. But at present, there is no food, people are displaced, everything is destroyed and there is nothing good in Mogadishu now. In

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<sup>9</sup> Since the ICU in fact dissolved itself on 27 December 2006, this discussion refers to the organization largely as it functioned in the past. At the same time, various sections of the ICU still exist and are operational, whether in transmuted shape or not.

today's world, either you are 'with us, or against us'. In reality, things are not that black and white".

As a consequence of this general belief that the ICU 'did many good things for Somalis and Somalia', as another informant phrased it, they had quite a strong and wide support base that allowed for remittance collection in Norway. Almost all those who indicated that they supported the ICU also had sent money to it, and the one person who had not said she would have if she had the economic resources to do so. The remittances that were sent were mainly sent during large-scale fundraising initiatives such as the large conference organized around the visit of an ICU delegation, in which three sheikhs from Norway also participated and Sheikh Shariif addressed the conference through telephone<sup>10</sup>. Around 600 people attended, and a committee was selected to collect donations. A typical contribution was 1,000 USD, some paid more, others less. The money was collected for the Mogadishu city cleaning project that the ICU initiated, and went into reconstruction of roads; removal of garbage; and renovation of the mosque. All those we interviewed who contributed, the majority of which were women, felt that they were contributing to a good cause and were convinced that the money was used to achieve what it was collected for, as the effects had been visible to their family members in Mogadishu.

Much of the discussions surrounding the ICU focused on the relatively short period in 2006 in which they ICU was in power, rather than the current situation. One of our key informants however did discuss the demise of the ICU in great detail, and had played an advisory role in trying to prevent this from happening, traveling to the region in 2006. He acknowledges that there were problems within the ICU at the time, in particular because they were divided amongst themselves. The military wing had little true understanding and was in a hurry to advance, especially the Alshabaab. The leaders were intellectuals with a wide range of religious convictions, who did not fully control the military. And the masses who supported them were ordinary Somali citizens whose main interest was the peace and stability the ICU brought. The military wing was stronger than the political one, and thus advanced faster than was good for them.

Furthermore, a number of the leaders saw the advantages of this strategy, as they realized what the consequences would be but were convinced that this would awaken a Somali nationalism that in the end would benefit the ICU. Whereas the ICU had internal divisions and also introduced a number of religiously-inspired measures that were quite unpopular with the masses, the current situation allows the organization to draw upon the pride in Somaliness amongst Somalis, by focusing on the fight against a common enemy: Ethiopia. Whereas the large majority of ICU supporters are not Islamists, this focus on fighting an unjust occupation draws away attention to the more radical aspects within the organization. In the end, it is the moderate forces within the

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<sup>10</sup> Sheikh Shariif Sheikh Ahmed is the chairman of the ICU, widely considered to be a moderate.



ICU that lost out as a consequence of events occurring in late 2006, and the current situation is benefiting its more radical elements.

### ***2.3 Clan-based support***

The research indicates that, whereas most Somalis in Norway support one or the other national political actor ideologically, the financial contributions they make that have the greatest practical impact on conflict and peace processes largely do not take place on this level. Rather, such contributions can be discerned at the (sub-)clan level. The reason for this is that the impact of sending money to this lower level is much more likely to be felt by family members than when the money is sent to overarching political actors like ICU and TFG. The larger national processes taking place in Somalia are in constant flux and Somalis in the diaspora have little confidence in their outcomes, especially after developments in 2006-2007. Tensions and conflicts between sub-clans on the other hand, are faced by relatives and friends directly and the level of influence diaspora support can have on the outcome of these conflicts is much greater.

It is possible to distinguish three types of financial contributions that are made by Somalis in the diaspora that potentially play a central role in conflict and peace processes. Firstly, contributions are needed for compensational payments (*diya*). Secondly, financial contributions are needed and provided in case of conflict between clans. And thirdly, they are needed to finance the reconciliation process that should allow two clans to end their hostilities. Below, we will elaborate on each of these types of contributions, with greatest attention to the last two.

*Diya* is an Islamic term referring to compensational payments in the event of homicide and the like. In Somalia, sub-clan groups conclude temporary cooperation contracts, the *xeer*, which include obligations such as helping to protect and rebuild a herd, taking care of vulnerable people and paying *diya*. The *diya*-paying groups play a crucial role in the clan system, guaranteeing physical strength and livelihood collaboration for a group of individuals. While being flexible and providing the group security, it is also highly unstable as alliances constantly shift and *xeer* agreements dissolve (Horst 2006b). Yet paying *diya* can be seen as a possible prevention of conflict, as in Islamic Law, engaging in *diya* negotiations is advised before retaliation. Also, *diya* negotiations are almost always part of the reconciliation process after conflict has already taken place.

#### ***2.3.1 Contributions to Conflict***

Somali sub-clan level conflicts currently and in the past are mainly caused by disputes over access rights or ownership of grazing areas and water sources for pastoralists; territorial control; disputes over properties like real estate, animals or farming lands; or failed *diya* negotiations. Although all our respondents agree that Somalis outside Somalia do not necessarily instigate conflict, they do play a crucial role in funding the parties

involved. The clan leaders who are faced with a conflict can obtain support from three sources: Somalis within Somalia, Somalis outside Somalia, and foreign governments. The clan support that can be expected from within Somalia takes the shape of agricultural produce; manpower; some financial resources through tax or protection money from businessmen (see also Hansen 2003). At times, Somalis outside Somalia can assist in securing assistance from foreign governments, whereas at other times, foreign governments, especially in the region, may have a vested interest in the conflict themselves. Yet the most likely source of financial income for clan disputes comes from clanmembers in the diaspora, and committees are set up in Somalia (at times combined with initiatives in the diaspora) to organize this.

**Textbox 1: Saleebaan Vs Sacad clan conflict**

The Saleebaan and Sacad clans, which are both sub-clans of the Habar Gidr Hawiye clans, inhabit Mudug and Galguduud regions. Conflict between them erupted in 2004, caused by pastoral and grazing issues between pastoralists from both clans but soon leading to full scale fights in both regions between the two clans. In later stages, the fighting grew into a political one, when both clans fought for the ownership and control over Hoby, which has a functional port. The conflict was financed by the respective diaspora of those clans. Money was sent monthly and at times with even shorter intervals. Every member of the diaspora of both clans had to contribute a specific amount and mostly, diaspora members paid monthly USD 300 per person. The money was collected by a committee in Norway, and thereafter sent to the respective clan. In Somalia similarly each clan had their assigned person for receiving these funds (khasnaji). The khasnaji was responsible for distributing the funds to the *mooryaan* (young fighters) fighting on behalf of his respective clan, and buying ammunitions for them. One of the key informants said that large amounts of the funds secured from the diaspora were not invested in the conflict but taken by the person responsible, and only a portion was distributed to supply the *mooryaan* with *qaad* and cigarettes, buy ammunition and weapons for them, as well as medicine. This was discovered by the respective diaspora members after they sent USD 200,000 a number of times. Many people were killed on both sides by the fighting, that continued between 2004 and 2006.

When a conflict occurs in the territory of a certain clan, the elders of the clan need to collect accurate information on what happened in order to assess the steps to take and evaluate whether it is possible to negotiate with the other clan or to take up arms against them. When military action seems the only option, a committee is established to start mobilizing clanmembers in the diaspora. Again, those clanmembers may be spread all over the globe and need to organize themselves. When a request reaches a central figure of that clan in Norway, for example, the Norwegian Somali group will coordinate the remittance sending through a selected

committee. That is why the diaspora does not get involved in many of the smaller conflicts taking place in Somalia, as this whole process simply takes some weeks and requires great coordination.

One example of a case in which the Somali diaspora in Norway and elsewhere got involved, is the conflict in Mudug and Galguduud regions that took place between 2004 and 2006, as described in textbox 1. Respondents in our research described a number of cases similar to the Mudug-Galgaduud conflict, and expressed how considerable sums are being sent to support a certain sub-clan. Often, both sides of the conflict will be mobilizing themselves in Norway, which of course has great implications

on their local relationships with each other as well. Quite considerable sums are being sent by individuals in Norway, depending also on their economic position. A few hundred to one thousand USD, sent at once or over a period of time, is not uncommon if the sub-clan faces serious threats that will affect clan members, relatives and friends.

Yunis Abdi for example, who has lived in Norway for almost twenty years, informed us that he paid USD 900 clan contributions to Hiiraan region. Clan members in Oslo established an organization through which the money was collected and sent after the clan's territory was occupied by another clan. The purpose for the collection was to enable their clan members in the region to fight against the occupation. Though exact figures are of course very difficult to establish, informants in Kenya who had been involved in clan collections from the receiving side while they were still in Somalia, indicated that on the lowest sub-clan levels, USD 500,000 could easily be collected, whereas on clan level, diaspora contributions could reach up to 5 million. With these sums, fighters can be paid and weaponry is bought. For example, when there is a threat of attack by another clan that clearly has better equipment, this can be solved by asking clan members in the diaspora for contributions. According to a key informant in Kenya, his sub-clan was able to buy three Armored Vehicles (Technicals) when there were threats of attack by a clan who was better equipped than they were. Those who contributed in the diaspora were informed of the way the money had been used.

### ***2.3.2 Contributions to Reconciliation***

Just like conflict requires great resources, so does settling conflict. In our Norwegian sample, our respondents talked as much about sending remittances in the case of conflict, as they did about their contributions to peace negotiations. Here, again, the role of the diaspora is largely in facilitating a process that is being initiated by the warring parties in Somalia. Commonly, in order for clan chiefs to negotiate a peace agreement, a *shir* (assembly) needs to be held that can take a considerable amount of time and resources. While all practical costs related to the *shir* and its participants need to be met, the reconciliation agreement will include compensational payments of various sorts and therefore requires large resources.

Hassan Ismail stresses the fact that 'money is the power we have and through which we can influence events in Somalia in a good way'. Indeed, the Somali diaspora in Norway has been contributing to a number of peace initiatives. Various respondents mentioned the Daroor case, where two Isaq clans within the Ogaden region of Ethiopia engaged in fierce fighting and the Somaliland diaspora played a critical role in the conflict resolution. Sub-clan members on both sides contributed to their *suldaan* (clan elder)-headed delegations, USD 1,000 each, and for one of the clans, USD 150,000 was collected in Norway, with a total sum of a few million USD received from the

diaspora.<sup>11</sup> Some of this money was borrowed from Dahabshil, one of the Somali *hawala* companies, and then later returned after all the money was collected. The conflict was solved by engaging in long negotiations that involved clan members in Ethiopia and Somaliland, paying *dija* and arranging cross marriages.

Besides contributing remittances to reconciliation efforts between clans, the Somali diaspora in Norway has been involved in efforts to contribute to peace in a number of other ways. One is related to initiatives to rehabilitate young combatants, *mooryaan*, through education and providing them livelihood opportunities. This project was initiated by Somali women in Mogdishu and then funded with private money by Somalis in Norway, before Norwegian institutions decided to further support it financially. Another is related to reconciliation initiatives in Norway, such as the attempts of the Somali self-organization G10 to mediate between the various Hawiye clans in Oslo. This is crucial because through their communication, some of the practices that sustain conflict may be addressed. In the Saleebaan-Sacad conflict that was described in textbox 1, the diaspora clan members started discussing the conflict and the wastage of their money amongst themselves. There were friendships across the clans, and some individuals initiated talks and used Somali websites to popularize their view of the conflict and the need to end it. Though currently, members of the Somali diaspora largely do not initiate reconciliation processes in Somalia, there may be exceptions that deserve further exploration for their potential in peacebuilding.

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<sup>11</sup> Sources quote figures ranging from 2 million USD for the reconciliation efforts to over 8.5 million for the whole conflict.

### 3. Alternative Engagements

So far, we have focused on what would be typically understood as transnational political engagements of a financial type by Somalis in Norway directed towards Somalia. It has become very clear how important the transnational dimension is in the lives of Somalis in Norway. As Sadio Mahat expresses it: 'Even if Somalis have Norwegian citizenship, they are very conscious of what is happening in Somalia. Our relatives and friends are in Somalia, and because we are very connected to them, all the problems that are there in Somalia are not far from Somalis in Norway'. Thus, it is not surprising that there is also such an active political engagement amongst Somalis. But there are other ways in which Somalis try to influence conflicts and peace processes, beyond the remittances sent to political actors in Somalia. In order to put the previous discussion in a broader perspective, we will now outline some alternative engagements which are either non-financial or non-political. We will distinguish between transnational activities that focus on Somalia and those that focus on Norway.

#### 3.1 *Somalia-focused*

One of the issues that came up while interviewing Somalis on their political engagements with Somalia, is that a number of the people we spoke to had a very strong aversion against those who did send financial contributions for political purposes, such as to support their clan in times of conflict. There were a number of people who very clearly wanted to contribute to peaceful conditions in Somalia, but who felt that they would never be able to achieve this through political initiatives. Rather, they strongly dissociated themselves from the political, stressing that activities that are often termed 'humanitarian aid' or 'development aid' can also be seen to contribute to peace and stability<sup>12</sup>. In fact, to some these are the *only* activities that can bring about change, either by focusing on educating the new generation into a different mindset while giving them opportunities; or by productive investments that create a new middle class with clear interests in peace.<sup>13</sup>

Education is highly valued by many Somalis in diaspora, and it is one of the public services that might receive the highest degree of remittances. Many of our respondents had contributed to primary, secondary and tertiary education in Somalia; some with the explicitly stated aim of increasing stability. Especially when Universities are built, large contributions from the diaspora, both in terms of finances and expertise, are needed. But even for primary and secondary schools, diaspora contributions are crucial. Marian Issa is cooperating with a group of women in Norway who pay the salaries of ten teachers. Marian herself sends USD 100, covering the salaries of two school teachers in Jamaame. In general, it is most common for people to contribute to their region of

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<sup>12</sup> A study amongst Somalis in Denmark found similar results (Kleist forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> See also Hansen's (2003) article.

origin, which is not surprising as it might allow them not just to improve the educational system but possibly also to contribute to the education of relatives. Furthermore, this strategy allows them to verify whether the money is spent well.

The lack of educational opportunities in Somalia puts young people at risk of engaging in violent conflicts, either as a livelihood strategy or as a way of passing time. Furthermore, an insufficiently educated young generation will create problems in a post-conflict phase. As such, investments that Somalis in Norway make in education in Somalia, may well be counted as important initiatives to contribute to stability. Another public sector that has received much support is the health sector. As Hassan Ismail pointed out 'The reason why we send this money is that there is no government that is assisting Somalis towards reconciliation and development. Schools and hospitals are normally provided by the government, but since there is no government, we are taking care of it in order to lift our society out of conflict'. Many others stressed that Somalis in the diaspora organized themselves to put in place basic infrastructure and services in Somalia. The sustained success of such initiatives of course depends on the general security situation and on the kind of cooperation between the diaspora and the local community. Constructions where both parties contribute relatively equally, are most likely to be successful.

Furthermore, a few individuals even argued that productive investments in irrigation equipments, business premises, communication technology, transportation etc. can contribute to peace and stability. Not only do such investments create a middle class with an interest in peace rather than conflict; also, with a booming local economy more individuals will be capable of gaining a livelihood disconnected from the conflict. Ideally, such investments may reduce the risks of conflict erupting. For example, if conflicts often arise over water points or grazing lands, investments that improve the conditions under which pastoralists operate may impact the occurrence of such types of conflicts.

Finally, even simply sending private remittances to family members directly without any intentions of impacting the larger society, may have direct links to the political situation in Somalia. The majority of informants indicated that during times of increased conflict, the remittances they sent to Somalia would increase accordingly. In the recent escalation of violence in Mogdishu, for example, this was clearly the case. One of the reasons for this was that prices skyrocketed and residents needed more money in order to be able to provide for their family livelihood. Another reason was that many relatives decided to flee Mogdishu, either to elsewhere in Somalia or to Kenya. Alternatives further abroad were also sought, as people lost confidence that Somalia is ever going to be peaceful. It is clear that the more sustained the conflict is, and the more periods of renewed severe fighting occur, the greater the chance that increasing numbers of people will flee the country and the less likely they will be willing to invest in return.

Displacement is not just a strategy chosen to deal with the increased insecurity. It is at times also a deliberate strategy chosen by the relatives in Norway to prevent that

their young male relatives engage in the conflict. In late December 2006, at the start of the escalation of the current round of conflicts, Harun Abdi sent his younger brother remittances so that he could move to Qatar, not primarily because of fears for his safety but rather because he was afraid that his brother would get involved in the fighting. After the Ethiopian invasion, according to Harun, many young men in Somalia were ready to take up arms and his brother was definitely at risk. And yet, Harun believed that there was a real need for peace rather than more fighting.

### ***3.2 Focus on Norway***

Though this seems to be a contradiction in terms, there are activities that Somalis in Norway engage in that focus on Norway but are transnational in nature. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) refers to these activities as indirect activities, since they try to influence conditions in Somalia through other actors, opposing them to the activities that focus on actors in Somalia directly. Somalis in Norway attempt to influence the situation in Somalia by for example lobbying activities within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs or relevant organizations, or by drawing attention to what is happening to a wider audience through demonstrations.<sup>14</sup>

There are many ways in which the respondents for this study were engaged in indirect political activities. Many mentioned they were trying to 'mobilize' the Somali community in Norway, either by initiating discussions amongst them; engaging in debates in the Norwegian media; or stressing the importance of unity. Some individuals have attempted to do these things in a more structured manner, for example by organizing a major conference. In May 2006, for example, the *Somali Peace Conference: Good Governance and Rule of Law*, was organized by the Somali Peace Initiative Group in Norway. This was a group of people who attempted to bring together Somalis in Norway from different backgrounds to discuss what initiatives could be undertaken from Norway in order to support peace building in Somalia. Funding for this conference was obtained from the MFA and UDI. Others have also attempted to bring together different organizations and individuals representing different sections of the Somali population in Norway through creating overarching networks, but so far, such initiatives have been difficult to sustain.

A small number of our informants were active members of Norwegian political parties such as AP, SV and SP. In the case of Somaliland, there are links between the Norwegian socialists and the Somali socialists in Somaliland and amongst the Somali diaspora, so there is a direct ideological connection that strengthens the support base for issues related to the Horn of Africa. For those who do not profit from a more

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that for this study, we selected people who were politically active, and this led to an overrepresentation of those who have lived in Norway for over ten years. We can assume that this also has implications for their level of knowledge and understanding of the Norwegian system, and thus their ability to engage in the indirect activities mentioned in this section.

established transnational connection, there are often still many transnational dimensions to their involvement in local Norwegian parties. Those active in Norwegian politics often illustrated their involvement with local issues that touched Somalis in Norway, as well as their attempts to lobby for certain issues in Somalia amongst political party members.

But the main lobbying activities seem to focus on Norwegian actors such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and, relatedly, NGOs. The MFA has what it calls an 'Open Door Policy', welcoming diaspora groups who contact them rather than initiating the contact themselves. Though it would be a great benefit for the ministry to deal with individuals or groups that are representative for the larger Somali community in Norway, the MFA recognizes that there are many different interest groups that need to be given an opportunity to express their viewpoints. There are clear differences as to how successful these groups are in maintaining a dialogue with the MFA, as well as obtaining further support.

Those from Somaliland seem to have a relatively strong and successful lobby. The Somaliland President and several cabinet ministers were invited twice to Norway, and different types of projects were funded by Norwegian institutions. There are a number of possible reasons for this, that could be explored further and built on in attempts to improve the efficiency of other groups. First, Somalilanders in general have a longer history in Norway. This has implications for their knowledge of the Norwegian system, including the functioning of the government. The ideological links with political parties mentioned earlier, backed by a transnational organization functioning in many countries, obviously gives weight to their voice as well. Furthermore, Somalilanders are more organized, with an overall representative, and less divided than other groups.<sup>15</sup> Possibly the most important factor enabling support is the fact that the kind of support that can be provided to Somaliland is of a fundamentally different nature from the support given to the South-Central region. Whereas Somaliland assistance operates within a functioning nation-state and is of a post-conflict type, assistance in South Central has to be focused on Peace and Reconciliation efforts or humanitarian aid, both of which are far more complex.

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<sup>15</sup> Not denying the fact that there are considerable political differences and clan differences, e.g. between the government and opposition parties. Yet in particular the Independence aspirations are a strong unifying force.



#### 4. In Conclusion

This study has shown the importance of the transnational political activities of Somalis in Norway. Sadio Mahat indicates this clearly when she says that “Somalis in the diaspora are very much connected to every political shift, every rebel group emerging, or every possible government institution that is established in Somalia. Always, it is the Somalis in exile it comes from”. At the same time, it is important not to overestimate the importance of the transnational political activities of Norwegian Somalis. In certain circumstances, other sources of funding, such as those provided by local businessmen or foreign governments, may be far more important than diaspora funding. Furthermore, the number of Somalis in Norway is only 18,000, and their socio-economic status is not good, as we saw earlier. And finally, whereas Norwegian institutions play a role in current political events in Somalia, especially through the ICG, it is still not a very decisive role compared to, for example, the position of the US government.

It is very difficult to draw any definite conclusions on the implications of the remittance sending practices amongst Somalis in Norway that have political impacts in Somalia. Yet our research points to some interesting policy implications, which are outlined below. Further research conducted for the ‘Diasporas for Peace. Case Studies from the Horn of Africa’ (DfP) project will allow us to explore some of the trends indicated in this report in greater detail. This 3-year EU-funded project includes more work on the political transnational activities of Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans in a number of European countries; studying these both in Europe and the Horn of Africa. It also involves a PRIO-coordinated work package that will focus on ways of engaging diaspora groups in government initiatives, producing a handbook that should be of practical use for all actors involved.

#### ***A more proactive policy towards diaspora involvement***

At present, the MFA has a largely reactive ‘open door policy’ towards the Somali diaspora. This report has indicated that Somalis in the diaspora, including those in Norway, at times are key players in conflict and reconciliation processes. As such, we recommend that the Ministry develop a more proactive policy towards diaspora involvement. The fact that it is very difficult to remain ‘neutral’ in dealing with the Somali diaspora does not necessarily merit dealing with groups on a case-by-case basis, nor does the approach of ‘inclusivity’ promise efficiency or great results. One can develop new ways of dealing with neutrality, for example by setting up a supervisory body or advisory committee consisting of Somali and Norwegian experts who can evaluate project proposals.

### ***Reconciliation amongst Somalis in Norway***

The study has shown that the Somali diaspora in Norway plays a clear financial role in maintaining conflict as well as in reconciliation efforts in Somalia. As such, it is vital that Norwegian government institutes support reconciliation initiatives amongst Somalis in Norway. Especially those initiatives that target conflicts between different sub-groups before moving on to more overarching issues, should be supported. Furthermore, clear policy guidelines on 'doing no harm' in relation to potentially increasing conflict amongst Somalis in Norway, are in order. Norwegian government institutes are amongst the largest suppliers of resources for the Somali diaspora here, and allocations of those resources can cause strains on intra-communal relationships.

### ***De-centralized Peacebuilding Initiatives***

There are many levels on which conflict and peacebuilding in Somalia take place. Whereas the focus of the international community has largely been on the state level, this report has shown that the greatest power of diaspora initiatives might rather lie on the sub-clan level. The advantages for the Norwegian government to focus on building state institutions in Somalia, are obvious. At the same time, this involvement does not preclude providing support to the many peace building initiatives that are taking place on a much more decentralized level. Such initiatives can be provided with financial input as well as expertise and know-how, for example by offering training opportunities to Somali Norwegians.

### ***Human rights violations***

The safety and security of civilians is arguably the top priority of all international initiatives in Somalia. Because of the complexities in attempting to understand the Somali conflict and the positioning of the Somalis in Norway in it, the Norwegian government's main role could first and foremost be to address human rights violations happening in the country, by any and all of the parties involved, or supporting others better positioned to do this.

### ***A comprehensive approach***

This report has shown that the distinction between humanitarian assistance, development aid and peace and reconciliation is not always straight forward. In section 3, it has outlined some of the 'humanitarian' or 'developmental' areas that Somalis in Norway try to engage in with the clear aim of contributing to more peaceful conditions in Somalia. As such, a closer cooperation and coordination between the different clusters would be beneficial. Such a more comprehensive approach could, for example,

create space for projects that prevent crises or provide alternatives for conflict, rather than merely responding to the consequences of crises by providing humanitarian aid.

***Further Research***

The DfP project, planned March 2008 to February 2011, will allow us to follow-up some of the processes identified and analyze the scale on which they occur. PRIO's involvement in the project unfortunately excludes studying the peacebuilding role of Somali self-organizations in Norway, though this will be done in other European countries. Another important study that would bridge the current research with the DfP work, would be an indepth case study of successfully supported diaspora initiatives, to draw out 'best practice' for the Handbook. Examples could include the 2006 Conference and the G-10 reconciliation efforts in Norway.



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## Appendix I: Informant Characteristics

### *Gender*

Male	13 (65 %)
Female	7 (35 %)

### *Age*

20-29	6 (30 %)
30-39	7 (35 %)
40-49	4 (20 %)
50-59	2 (10 %)
> 60	1 (5 %)

### *Clan*

Daarod	6 (30 %)
Dir	3 (15 %)
Hawiye	6 (30 %)
Isaq	5 (25 %)

### *Region of Origin*

Somaliland	5 (25 %)
Puntland	3 (15 %)
South-Central	12 (60 %)

### *Year of Arrival*

< 1990	5 (25 %)
1990-1994	5 (25 %)
1995-1999	5 (25 %)
2000-2004	4 (20 %)
Unknown	1 (5 %)

### *Citizenship*

Somali	7 (35 %)
Norwegian	12 (60 %)
Unknown	1 (5 %)

### *Level of Education*

None	1 (5 %)
Primary	3 (15 %)
Secondary	5 (20 %)
BA	6 (30 %)
MA	5 (20 %)