

XERO-JAALE RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation activities in Mudug Region aim to put an end to a long-standing conflict.

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The Xero-Jaale conflict has persisted for over three decades, with its origins rooted in land disputes, retaliatory killings, and competition over resources in West Mudug, Puntland. The conflict has resulted in casualties, displacement, and deep-seated mistrust among the affected communities and clans. Despite several peace efforts, violence has continued due to delays in compensation payments, lack of law enforcement, and unresolved grievances.

Between 2003 and 2015, traditional elders led four separate initiatives to try to resolve the conflict, but all were unsuccessful. In September 2024, the President of Puntland appointed a committee to recommend new approaches to address the ongoing conflict.

Subsequently, in 2024, the Somalia Stability Fund III (SSF III) funded a peacebuilding initiative, led by MoIFAD, in collaboration with ISRAAC. The initiative aimed to address the root causes of the conflict and establish a sustainable reconciliation framework. Reconciliation activities brought together more than 140 key stakeholders, including government officials, elders, religious leaders, and community representatives.

Reconciliation activities included:

1. Stakeholder engagement and conflict mapping

Stakeholder mapping and engagement meetings addressed the magnitude of the conflict, and recognized that government officials, traditional elders, religious leaders, youth, women and marginalised groups must play a part in the reconciliation process for it to succeed.

2. An inter-communal reconciliation conference

The inter-communal conference allowed conflicting parties to present their claims, after which a preliminary agreement was drafted and shared with the conflicting parties in the presence of government representatives.

3. A high-level, inter-clan reconciliation conference

The high-level conference brought together members of the conflicting parties, including elders, women, youth, businesspeople and religious groups. Elders created counter-narrative speeches using poetry to emphasize tolerance for diversity, freedom of expression, and human rights.

4. Official signing of the peace agreement

The official signing took place in the presence of the Xero-Jaale elders, the mediation committee and government officials.



WORKSTREAM 2: CONCILIATION

AT A GLANCE

PARTNER

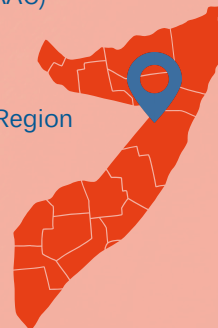
- Puntland's Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization (MoIFAD) and the Institute for Studies, Researchers and Academic Community (ISRAAC)

ACTIVITY

- Reconciliation in Mudug Region

LOCATION

- Xero-Jaale, Mudug Region, Puntland



FAISO ALI ISMAIL

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation of Puntland

"Women are the cornerstone of lasting peace. I call upon the young women of Xero-Jaale to take an active role in peacebuilding, for their voices and actions are essential in shaping a harmonious future".



“WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY MEDIATED ALL DISPUTES AND REACHED A COMPREHENSIVE RECONCILIATION AGREEMENT TODAY.”

Nadaboon Xabiib Xirsi Barre, the Chairman of Kuulbeer clan's Peace & Reconciliation Committee, said: “We began this journey from a place of deep division and conflict among the Reer Kuulbeer clans. With the unwavering support of the Puntland Government, particularly MoIFAD, we have successfully mediated all disputes and reached a comprehensive reconciliation agreement today. This achievement is a testament to the power of dialogue and compromise.”

The Xero-Jaale peacebuilding initiative, and the subsequent reconciliation agreement, played a pivotal role in facilitating the return of one of the Kulbeer sub-clans, who had been driven out of the community for over two years by the rival clan, leaving them without access to basic services, such as healthcare and education. This development has enhanced social cohesion, allowed the sub-clan access to vital services, and also fostered a conducive environment for inter-community business engagements.

Elders and youth respondents confirmed the Xero-Jaale communities are living peacefully - violent clashes have decreased, and peaceful dialogue has increased thanks to the training programme that engaged with a wide group of stakeholders on conflict resolution, negotiation, and civic engagement. Consequently, even though the target date for full blood compensation payment - May 6th - was not met due to several challenges, including drought and a worsening economic situation, the mediation committee and both clans have communicated about the delay and agreed to a three-month extension.

Why is this work important?

Local reconciliation initiatives, such as those in Xero-Jaale, are essential in preventing the recurrence of violence by directly addressing root causes like land disputes, political marginalization, and historical injustices.

The Xero-Jaale peacebuilding initiative exemplifies how grassroots efforts can foster a future-oriented approach to reconciliation, known locally as 'genuine conciliation' (dhab-u-heshiis), that shifts the focus from past violations to a shared narrative. These local processes are not isolated; rather, they are foundational to Somalia's broader peacebuilding and state-building trajectory.

Somalia's transition to a federal system and the restoration of effective government depend on overcoming entrenched clan divisions and historical grievances. Reconciliation at the community level, as seen in Xero-Jaale, supports the formation of functional governance structures and a more inclusive civil society. This, in turn, enables Somalis to reconcile political interests and work towards shared national goals, as highlighted in Somalia's National Reconciliation Framework and National Transformation Plan. Without such reconciliation, the legacy of conflict continues to fuel mistrust and cycles of violence, undermining both local stability and national efforts to build a cohesive federal state.

While the pursuit of peace and stability is often fraught with challenges, SSF III's focus on promoting social cohesion and healing offers a pathway towards creating a more inclusive and equitable political landscape.

KEY OUTCOMES

1. The parties successfully reached a **formal agreement**, which was signed by the elders representing each conflicting. Puntland's MoIFAD will serve as the guarantor and enforcer.
2. **Blood compensation agreements:** 110 camels to be paid to Reer Waraabe community and 100 camels and \$3,000 to be paid to Reer Warfaa Wacays.
3. **Puntland State Government paid \$12,000**, representing 30% of the 110 camel compensation payment. In the past, economic hardship hindered the community's ability to pay compensation, so the State Government stepped in to ensure the success of the reconciliation process.
4. **Implementation timeline:** all compensation payments to be completed by May 6th, 2025.