

# Water-based Conflict in Sool Region: Case Studies Jidbale Water Well and Dabardalol Water Well in Hudun District

Mohamed Abdikadir Daud (Stanza)  
Somali National University  
stanzasom@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70806/580wjg74>

## Abstract

This paper examines the negative consequences and impacts of water-based conflict on the nomads in Sool Region, taking Jidbale Well and Dabardalol Well as case studies.

The Jidbale and Dabardalol water-based conflict between Jama Siyad and Ugadyahan who are two sub-clans that belong to the Dulbahante clan in Northeast State of Somalia, represents a critical case of resource-based armed conflict in this semi-arid part of Somalia, where access to drinkable water is vital for survival and livelihoods of the nomads and pastoralists from these two brotherly sub-clans, who hail from the same father – Siyad Mohamud.

The two sub-clans fought over water utility and well management in December, 2020 and in April, 2021, while the author of this paper was based in Lasanod City and was the Coordinator of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Analysis of Nugaal University in Lasanod – the Headquarters of Sool Region, where he then closely followed the consequences of the said armed conflicts.

The two wells are Located in a drought-prone area in the semi-arid Sool Region in the northern part of Somalia – the current newly-established

Northeast State of Somalia, where water scarcity incites intra-clan disputes.

Dabardalol Well serves as a key water source for surrounding pastoralists and nomads from the above-mentioned sub-clans. Over time, population pressure, environmental degradation and prolonged recurrent droughts have been intensifying competition over the well which is situated in the vicinity of Hudun District in Sool Region, resulting in periodic clashes between these two sub-clans vying for its control, water utility and tribal ownership of it, too.

This conflict was further exacerbated by the then weak governance structures, limited conflict resolution mechanisms and the absence of equitable water-sharing agreements between the said conflict actors and dispute stakeholders.

This paper explores the root causes of this armed conflict, the main driving factors, the conflict actors, the socio-political dynamics of the two conflicting sub-clans and the negative consequence of this intra-tribal armed conflict, including the death toll, the economic destruction it caused and also the massive displacement which resulted from this resource-based armed conflict.

Also, the study examines the role of the traditional elders from Dulbahante clan, the role

of academicians from the local community and the role of the then ruling Somaliland Administration in mediating and peacefully resolving this water-based armed conflict and promoting locally-led sustainable water management in order to get a durable solution to this resource-based conflict.

Finally, this paper which was presented at the International Conference on Water, Peace and Security – 27 – 28 October 2025, Water as a Catalyst for Peace and Cooperation that was organised and held in Nairobi by IHE DELFT Institute for Water Education Under the Auspices of UNESCO, highlights the challenges of water utility management, governance and peace-building in a fragile pastoralist setting, offering timely insights into the importance of all-inclusive dialogue and locally-rooted conflict resolution strategies for the sake of post-conflict transformation with the augmentation of the Somali customary law over water sharing because of community conflict prevention, conflict mitigation and conflict management at the state level. It is published by Horn of Africa Journal for Social Science with the official permission of the author and the organisers of the above-stated conference.

**Key Terms:** Water, Conflict, Sool and Region.

## Introduction

According to Daud (2025), Conflict is a verbally expressed disagreement or dispute between two or more disputing conflict actors and opposing parties (conflict stakeholders) whose divergent

interests are incompatible with each other because of a clearly stated causative conflict factors and conflict drivers.

According to Community Board Program, Inc (1987, p. 23), the term conflict was derived from the Latin word 'conflictus.' So, the etymology of the word conflict is from the Latin language and its meaning is 'to strike together.'

Water-based conflict is a hydraulic dispute between two conflicting parties which happens as a result of access, use and management of natural water. Therefore, the armed conflict between the two above mentioned clans is a resource-based conflict since water is the most important resource that is, a lifeline for the Somali pastoralists and nomads in Sool Region of Somalia.

Since the topographical features of Sool Region is semi-arid, water scarcity causes constant clan conflicts and recurrent inter-clan skirmishes over the clan possession of boreholes and wells in this region like many other regions in Somalia, where tens of clan fighters fall on account of inter-clan lethal battles.

In conclusion, hydraulic scarcity is a negative factor and a causative indicator of bloody violence between the Somali clans in Sool Region. Therefore, the water-based clan confrontations which occurred at Jidbale Well in 2020 and at Dabardalol Well in 2021, exemplify how far water scarcity causes inter-clan conflicts and intra-clan disputes in Sool Region, selecting the two incidents of Jidbale Well and Dabardalol Well as case studies for water-based armed conflict in

Somalia in general and in the semi-arid Sool Region in particular.

## Background

Sool Region is located in the newly formed Northeast State of Somalia in the northern part of Somalia. This new and autonomous federal state was formed by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation under the official supervision of the Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation of the Federal Government of Somalia Ali Yussuf Ali (Hosh).

Northeast State of Somalia, which is the newest federal state in Somalia, was officially established by the Federal Government of Somalia on July the 30th 2025. Geographically, this young federal state consists of Sool Region, Sanaag Region and Togdheer Region of Somalia. This federal state is bordered by Puntland State of Somalia in the east, Gulf of Aden in the north, Northwest Region of Somalia (the secessionist Somaliland) in the west and the Somali Regional State (Ogaden Region) – the Somali-owned and Somali-populated region that is administered by the Federal Republic of Ethiopia) in the South (The Constitutional Drafting Committee of Northeast State of Somalia, 2025).

This new federal state was previously known as SSC-Khatumo Interim Administration and it was formed after Somaliland's military was routed out of the territory of SSC-Khatumo in August 2023. The SSC-Khatumo Interim Administration was

recognised by the Federal Government of Somalia in October 2023 and it was presided by Leader Abdikadir Au Ali (Firdhiye).

Sool Region of Somalia is part of the semi-arid plateau of northern Somalia, characterised by flat terrain with low hills and seasonal watercourses known as togog. The region lies approximately between 9°N and 10°N latitude and 47°E and 49°E longitude, making it a part of the Somali ecological zone that is usually dominated by pastoralism with Somali nomads and dry rangelands (Menkhaus, 2003 & Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2005).

Sool Region became a region on June the 24th 1984 with President Mohamed Siad Bare's presidential decree during an administration reorganisation.

The most famous gorges in this region are: Wakderi Gorge with Wakderi Farms, Hargago Gorge (the base of Dhegdheer traditional folktale) and Sihawle Gorge. In addition, it has spectacular dales or valleys like Odagoye Valley, Asura Valley and also historical sites for tourism like the Taleh Forts.

Formerly, Sool Region consisted of 4 districts: Lasanod District, Hudun District, Taleh District and Ainabo District. Now, Ainabo is disowned by this new federal state (Northeast State) because Ainabo District is administered by Somaliland Administration which is at war with this newly-established state.

The capital city of Sool Region is Lasanod, which is the administrative headquarters of Northeast

State of Somalia, is approximately 130 kilometres by road to Garowe which is the administrative seat of Puntland State of Somalia (Bare, 2025). Lasanod is approximately 1026 kilometres to Mogadishu – the coastal Capital City of Somalia (SOMASCA, 2022). It is a mountainous city which is located amongst huge mountains, including the historical Mountain of Sayid Mohamed (Buurta Sayidka). On top of the summit of this historical site is situated the former sentry of the Dervish Movement and the special guards of Sayid Mohamed were based there for repulsing the British colonial forces. Also, Lasanod is where the Second President of Somalia His Excellency Abdirashid Ali Sharmake was assassinated on October the 15th 1969 by an assassin called Said Yussuf Ismail (Orfane). Despite the assassin being called this name, the name on his official ID with which he was conscripted into the Somali Police was Cabdulqaadir Cabdi Maxamed and his own ID number was 4745. Abtidoon (2021, p. 46).

This city is recovering from the heavy shelling and bombardment of Somaliland forces which resulted from the military engagement between the Dulbahante clan's combatants (Jamaaahir) backed by the wider Harti tribe and the Somaliland armed forces that were then based in Sool Region. This conflict which destroyed the city and partially had damaged service-providing institutions like Lasanod General Hospital and Nugaal University (The first university which was established in this region in 2004), was instigated by the Blue Revolution that finally vanquished Somaliland forces in the Battle of Goojacadde on

August the 25th 2023, after nine months of heavy fighting. In that battle, many prisoners of wars (POWs) were then captured from the Somaliland forces by the forces of SSC-Khatumo that launched the large-scale military offensive against the main base (The Stronghold Garrison of Goojacadde) of Somaliland in the outskirts of Lasanod. The victory of SSC-Khatumo resulted in its recognition as an interim state by the Federal Government of Somalia, after two months of that heavy and deadly battle. This state was recognised by the Federal Government of Somalia because the dominant clan in Northeast State of Somalia, Dulbahante, is a unionist clan which didn't sign any agreement with the colonial powers; in contrast to this, the dominant clan in Somaliland, Isak clan, is a separatist clan that campaigns for the division of Somalia into two countries – the secession of Somaliland.

### **Jidbale Well**

Jidbale Well is a water well which is located in Jidbale Hamlet in Sool Region of the Northeast Federal State of Somalia. It is situated in Hudun District of Sool Region. Approximately, it is 70 kilometres to Lasanod in the northern direction. The water of this well is turbid and salty, too, as the researcher was told by respondents from the local population in this undeveloped tiny village.

Historically, Jidbale is where the deadly *Battle of Jidbale* between the Dervish Movement's warriors and the British forces occurred on January the 9<sup>th</sup> 1904. Mukhtar (2003, p. 175). The Dervish

freedom fighters were vanquished at the Battle of Jidbale because of the military strategy set by Auwka-jabane from the Dulbahante clan in the area. It was first defeat that the Dervish Movement led by Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hassan suffered because almost 600 Dervish combatants were killed in this spot. The impact of *Jidbale Battle* is still visible.

The following lines of Somali poetry which were composed by a pro-British Somali poet from Isak clan in the aftermath of the *Jidbale Battle* in 1904, indicate the magnitude and impact of the *Jidbale Defeat* (Qorane, 2025):

- *Daarood Ismaaciil ninkii, doonayoow, dhimamaye*
- *Didibtii Jidbaaleey lafuhu, debadda yaallaane.*

English Translation by the Researcher

- *He who wants him, Daarood Ismaaciil is dead*
- *His bones are on the sandstones of Jidbale.*

These two lines showcase that many Dervish warriors fell in the combat zone of Jidbale in 1904. As the researcher was told by Yussuf Hassan Ismail, who is a writer from Sool Region that visited Jidbale in February 2021, cartridges of the fired machine gun of the *1904 Battle of Jidbale* are still scattered in all over the hamlet. Whoever that follows the Somali history and the political history of the Dervish Movement and is interested in Somali poetry, is familiar with the Battle of Jidbale because a lot of verbatim and written discourses were said about it, including the following lines of

poetry which some historians claim were composed by Sayid Mohamed in the aftermath of the said battle:

- *Dagaalkii Jidbaalaba ninkii, joogay baan ahaye*
- *Ilaahay I jecelaa muxuu, jiray arwaaxaygu!*

English Translation by the Researcher

- *I am the man who took part in the Battle of Jidbaale*
- *The Almighty God loves me so much that He protected me.*

A poet called Kaarshe Guleed Niiqle (from Dulbahante clan) who was also a pro-British and was against the Dervish Movement, composed the following poem as a celebration for the British colonial forces' victory and as a moral punishment against the vanquished Dervish Movement. Idaajaa (2020, p. 37).

- *Daraawiishta qooqani markay, nagu qamaamaysay*
- *Ma u qarinnay maadhiin QAC liyo, qabar aan loo sheegin?*
- *Ma u qubatay sida roob guyoo, yara qayoonaaya?*
- *Qudha kalama maarmine dagaal, qaro leh ma u keennay?*

Translation by the Researcher

- *When the swaggering Dervishes were attacking us swiftly amok,*
- *Did we not use a roaring Maxim gun without their knowledge?*
- *Did they not fall down like the rainfall of the spring's precipitation?*

- *As we were so fearless, did we not engage them in a heavy fighting?*

### **Dabardalol Well**

The Dabardalol Well is a famous water well which is situated in the southern direction of Hudun District in Sool Region. The spot that this well is located is not far from the town of Hudun. According to the information from the local community, the water of this well is brackish and it is not safe for human consumption because of pollutants and contaminants in its water. Despite its water being undrinkable, 21 men from the two clans were lost in the Battle of Dabardalol in April 2021 as a result of the clans' territorial ownership of this water well which is a perennial water well with salty and muddy water. Formerly, the herders from the both clans as well as other Somali clans in the region, used to share the contaminated water of this very famous water well.

### **Problem Statement**

The water-based conflict between Jama Siyad and Ugadyahan sub-clans of the Somali Dulbahante clan, which erupted in December 2020 and re-erupted in April 2021, as has been mentioned in the abstract of this paper, resulted in human death, economic destruction, disruption of life, displacement of the local population from these two brotherly sub-clans, physical casualties and mental trauma. Therefore, this paper highlights the negative impact of water-based armed inter-clan conflict on the poor pastoralists and nomads in Sool Region of the Northeast State of Somalia, which is a newly-established state.

In conclusion, this paper states the problem of water scarcity and its negative role in intra-sub-clan and inter-clan armed conflicts, structured social violence and deadly societal aggression, displaying its destructive impact on the locals.

### **Objectives**

This analytical paper aims at achieving the following major objectives:

- To explore the role of water scarcity in clan conflict in Sool Region.
- To thoroughly examine the main root causes and the underlying drivers of the water-based conflict between the two clans that are under study.
- To painstakingly assess the socio-economic impacts of this water-based conflict on the pastoralists from these two clans in Sool Region.
- To investigate the total death toll which was caused by this conflict.
- To equip policy-makers with helpful guidelines on peace-building.
- To provide recommendations for the sake of conflict resolution, peace-building and also long-term local stability in the entire Sool Region.

### **Significance**

This analytical paper is very significant for the modern universal peace studies and conflict resolution. It is an academic contribution and a scholarly eye-opening from a peace practitioner and human rights advocate who holds master degree in Peace and Development Studies, and

that is, familiar with the root causes, conflict actors and the negative impact of the water-based conflict on nomads in Sool Region. It will be useful to the mitigation, management and reconciliation of this conflict. It is an up-to-date study which will equip all the local and international concerned bodies with helpful insights, tips and updates. finally, this paper contributes to peace experts and conflict analysis with new contributions which will make them familiar with the causes, consequences and impact of water-based conflict on the local population.

### **Methodology**

The methodology which this paper employs and the researcher used for the collection of both the primary data and the secondary data in this study is a descriptive and analytical qualitative methodology backed with the solidified familiarity of the researcher with the 2 conflict actors & the local community.

The primary data which this paper contains, emanate from three major sources: different interviews which were conducted with the local community in Sool Region who belong to the two sub-clans, former university work-mates of the researcher who worked with him at Nugaal University and the local knowledge and observation of the researcher who had been living in Lasanod from 2016 to 2023, where he had been a full-time lecturer at Nugaal University for seven years. In addition to this, he was the Coordinator of the Centre for Conflict Analysis and Peace-

building of Nugaal University in Lasanod from 2020 to 2023. Therefore, familiarity with the issue is backbone to the primary data. Thus, the primary data in this paper is new and contributive briefing.

The secondary data in this study was collected from the available literature which was written about the water-based armed conflict in Sool Region by the Somali digital media outlets, documents which were written by researchers and academicians from Sool Region. In this regard, both the secondary data and the primary data in this paper are relevant to water-based conflict analysis.

### **Limitations**

The main limitation which became a negative challenge to the conduction of this study is the prevalent sensitivity among the Somali respondents from the rural areas. Generally, Somali people are sensitive to questions which are related to clan conflicts. Also, they see researchers as intruders and suspect them of having evil aims. So, this study faced this challenge and some of the people that the researcher contacted for the sake of getting primary data from them, rejected to answer his own questions about this resource-based conflict.

The second main challenge which limited the scope of this study is lack of locally-conducted research about this clan conflict. Thus, there is great research gap because the Somali people in general, are infamous for their underestimation of the importance of research for community

promotion and institutional building. So, the researcher faced this academic challenge, too.

The researcher tried to find out the exact number of the people who were wounded in the above stipulated armed clan conflict, but all in vain because Somali clans do not like telling the number of their casualties, dead and wounded. Also, they do not like their casualties to be documented. Therefore, studying such incidents is not easy for any Somali researcher and non-Somali researcher in all over Somalia as a result of the above explained main reasons.

## **The Conflict**

### **The Root Cause of the Conflict**

This detrimental water-based conflict emanated from the divergent resource competition over Jidbale Well and Dabardalol Well in Hudun District of Sool Region in Northeast State of Somalia. The position, interest and need (PIN) of the two clans clashed. As the researcher was told by Mr Yussuf Hasan Ismail (2025), the fighting between the two clans began when one of the clans tried to dig a well in Jidbale area in December 2020 and 7 men were killed there; while some other clan combatants from them were wounded in that battle.

In April 2021, these two clans fought over Dabardalol Well in Hudun District and 21 fighters from the two clans were murdered there because of that heavy fighting. Many other clan warriors were also injured in the combat zone. So, the root cause of this water-based clan conflict is the

territorial ownership of the said two wells in Sool Region, utilisation of their water and the tribal management of the wells as a result of water scarcity in all over Sool Region.

According to a respondent from Hudun District who was interviewed for the primary data collection of this paper, but requested not to be named for reasons best known to him, the water-based conflict of Dabardalol began when one man from one of the clans tried to take over the well for his personal exclusive ownership and he had caused the armed conflict between the two said clans.

Dr. Abdinasir Mohamed Bare (The Deputy President of Nugaal University and the Head of the Constitutional Drafting Committee of the Northeast State of Somalia) who was interviewed by the researcher for the primary data collection of this paper on August the 11<sup>th</sup> 2025, in Mogadishu, told the researcher that the above mentioned man wanted to use the water well for irrigation of a farm which he was planning to establish near the said well.

According to Bare (2025, August, 11), farming is another factor which escalates intra-clan conflict and inter-clan land-based disputes in Sool Region. Whenever farmers try to establish farms for growing crops, cultivating and harvesting agricultural produces from them, they clash with the Somali livestock owners who accuse them of environmental damage or destruction.

Apart from the ownership of the clan constituency, another negative factor is the

settlement of water points – establishment of new hamlets in the rural areas, where the two mentioned water wells are located. Formerly, the nomads and herders from the 2 clans used to share the water from the wells in the wide terrain of Nugaal Valley in Sool Region. They used to water their livestock and fetch water for their families from these wells and others in the region. Thus, turning the grazing land into hamlets is one of the main root causes of this water-based conflict between the two clans who live together in the region.

According to an interview which the researcher conducted with the Mayor of Lasanod Mr Abdirahim Ali Ismail on November the 29<sup>th</sup> 2021 and was carried out for the analysis of the root causes of clan conflict in Sool Region, delay of blood money is one of the main factors that restarts conflicts. He said, “As Somali people are revengeful, whenever blood compensation is delayed, the victims revenge and when they revenge, others avenge on them too.” In light of this, blood money delay is a major negative factor which renews conflicts.

Mohamed Abdi Farah (Loyan) who is a poet that hails from Hudun District that was interviewed by the researcher on August the 10<sup>th</sup> 2025 for the root cause analysis of this conflict, believes that the root cause of the conflict is Somaliland’s attempt to mine for gold and other minerals at Boocda in Hudun District, without the knowledge and acceptance of the local community. Also, he opines that the failure of peace agreement between the two clans was caused by the

unwanted interference of Somaliland in the affairs of the two clans.

### **The Main Conflict Drivers**

The main conflict drivers in this water-based conflict are: lack of integrated rural community development at the community level with underlying high rate of youth illiteracy and youth unemployment, poor strategy of equal and equitable water utilisation and widespread tribalism in the community psychology which the two clans share with the other Somali clans in Somalia.

The other external driver of this conflict was lack of implementation of clan ceasefires and this is because of the lack of trust between Somaliland and the clans. Most of the community leaders and influential figures, including the academicians and the clerics from Sool Region, used to see Somaliland as an external invader and occupation that was in Sool to take over their region. Therefore, the community was not cooperating with the then administration. So, the lack of cooperation between the society and the security personnel of Somaliland was partially driving this conflict because the community had negative impression about its involvement in the internal clans’ affairs. Since there was no confidence in the authority, this was an external conflict driver.

### **The Main Conflict Actors**

The main actors of this water-based conflict are the illiterate youths and young adults from the two clans. As a result of this, most of the casualties who heavily suffered in the clan combat zones are

the afore-mentioned conflict actors. According to the researcher's own knowledge and critical personal observations, in line with the feedback of the respondents from the local community, most of the victims that either died or got wounded at Jidbale and Dabardalol battles were nomadic and uneducated youths and young adults. Usually, illiterate Somali youths and young adults are the front line fighters and direct conflict actors in all the clan conflicts which erupt in Somalia.

### **Number of the Wounded Clan Fighters**

There are no accurate figures which indicate the wounded victims in this water-based conflict. Despite this, Jama Bile Osman who is one of the community activists in the region and is also a lecturer at Nugaal University, that was interviewed by the researcher on August the 9<sup>th</sup> 2025, through the Messenger, believes that the number of the wounded clan combatants is thrice the number of the clan fighters who were killed in action in the combat zones.

### **The Dibshabel Peace Gathering**

After the Battle of Dabardalol in April 2021, the elders, clerics, elites and academicians of the Ugadyahan Siyad clan gathered at Dibshabel Village in Hudun District to declare full ceasefire, mitigate the negative impact of the armed conflict with their brothers, manage the situation and initiate mechanism of conflict resolution. The secessionist Somaliland administration, which was then ruling Sool Region, also sent a peace delegation to Dibshabel Peace Gathering. The Somaliland delegation which was headed by the then Somaliland's Minister of Interior Mr

Mohamed Kahin participated in that meeting and luncheon was prepared for that peace delegation (SLNTV, 2021). Despite Somaliland's peace delegation attending that meeting, the local participants in the meeting had no confidence in Somaliland. Most of the Ugadyahan clan's community leaders and academicians in that gathering saw Somaliland as an intruding evildoer in their homeland. So, when Somaliland talked about peace it was a war for the Ugadyahan attendees in the meeting. At the time, Ugadyahan clan was considered pro-Puntland State of Somalia. For this reason, Somaliland saw this clan as an anti-Somaliland clan that was against its own political interest and stay in the conflict-prone Sool Region. Thus, this factor can be used for the analysis of the failure of that peace conference since the unionist perception of the Ugadyahan clan and the separatist conception of the Somaliland Administration were not in the same boat due to their then disparate political interest which opposed each other.

### **Yagori Peace Talks**

While the Ugadyahan clan was gathering in Dibshabel Village, the Jama Siyad clan also convened a parallel peace talks in Yagori town in Sool Region to discuss about the matter, mitigate the impact of the war, manage the armed conflict and engineer a way out for a reconciliation with their own brothers.

As the parallel meetings were underway separately and both of the embattled clans were declaring ceasefire, paving the way for their comprehensive peace agreement, Somaliland

meddled in the peace process and pressurised the two clans into meeting together in Yagori, end their armed conflict and sign peace agreement under the auspices and guidance of Somaliland Administration.

Yagori is the nerve centre of Jama Siyad clan. Therefore, holding peace talks for two fighting clans in the base of operation of one of the fighting clans is an uncalled-for mistake which Somali Administration committed. The peace talks were supposed to be held in a neutral town like Boocame – the nerve centre of Hassan Ugas - where the negotiators could feel peace at themselves. Holding the meeting in Yagori was like holding the meeting in Hudun – the nerve centre of the Ugadyahan clan. So, the negotiators from the Ugadyahan clan felt what the negotiators from the Jama Siyad clan could feel if Somaliland held the peace talks in Hudun. This is the researcher's opinion.

Mr Yussuf Hasan Ismail, who is an academician from Sool Region, firmly believes that no positive agreement was reached in Yagori by the two clans because of Somaliland's involvement in that peace convention. He strongly conceptualises that the forceful involvement of Somaliland in Yagori Peace Talks spoiled the mission and vision of that peace meeting because, while the conference was going on, the election of the local councilors began in Sool Region. Therefore, that peace convocation was concluded in May 2021, without reaching any concrete conflict resolution and conclusive clan agreement. Thus, the issue was badly worsened by the external conflict actors.

Despite Yussuf's claim and accusation against Somaliland, Mr Jama Bile Osman who hails from one of the conflicted clans, told the researcher that this conflict was not resolved because there are pending issues which are related to blood money payments between the two clans prior to this conflict. The two clans agreed upon the schedule and timeline of the blood money payment, but the implementation of the agreement was delayed by the war which broke out between Dulbahante and Somaliland. As he said, since Somaliland was seen an external enemy, the two clans and the entire Dulbahante united for their fight against Somaliland. Both respondents believe that Somaliland was not ready for building peace in the region, but it was there for its political interest. As this respondent said to the researcher, resolving this conflict is a priority for the newly-established federal state and it will be the first reconciliation which will be held after the finalisation of the ongoing state-building process.

In contrast to this, a study entitled "Baseline Survey on Community Conflicts in Eastern Regions of Somaliland" which was prepared by researchers from the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies of the University of Hargeisa in July 2021, states that the role of Somaliland in the peace-making of the two clans was positive. It states that, "The Government of Somaliland deployed a military contingent between the two clans fighting over resource control."

Depending on his knowledge about the standpoints of the researchers from Hargeisa and the academicians from Lasanod, their diverging

viewpoints are like the antithesis between right and left because of the political hostility and social animosity between Somaliland and the people of the Northeast State.

Finally, there is a negative peace between the two brotherly clans. As a result of this, the re-occurrence of this water-based conflict in the near future is highly possible. According to the previously quoted researcher, this conflict is likely to happen again because no reparation, compensation and blood money payment strategy was fully and finally agreed upon as the Peace Meeting of Yagori was finalised without any reliable results and fruitful outcome from it. Thus, Somaliland which was accused of not capturing the perpetrators who assassinated many people in Lasanod, is seen as spoiler of that peace meeting.

### **Nugaal University's Peace-building Role**

On October the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022, the Centre for Conflict Analysis and Peace-building of Nugaal University with the cooperation of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies of the University of Hargeisa, initiated a 5-day conflict resolution training for Sool Region's Roving Peace Mediators in Lasanod.

Knowingly, the author of this paper was the trainer who offered that conflict resolution and peace-building training which took place at Casuura Hotel in Lasanod. The researcher trained different trainees from various clans on behalf of Nugaal University in Lasanod. That conflict resolution and peace-building training was part of a transitional justice programme and it was implemented with the logistic support and

financial assistance of Interpeace's Miisaan Programme with the full partnership of Berghof Foundation and MediaInk.

The participants in that conflict resolution and peace-building training were selected from the community traditional leaders, religious leaders, women groups, youth groups, academicians and business community in Sool Region. They were trained as peace-builders, peace-makers and skilled mediators. All of them were not from the two clans who fought over the water wells in Jidbale and in Dabardalol. Despite this, some of the trainees were influential figures from the two clans who had good knowledge of the local communities' causes of conflict. So, Nugaal University played a viable role in the mitigation of this water-based conflict and had offered its required timely community service.

### **Role of the Clerics of Sool Region in the Peace Process**

When the fighting of Dabardalol erupted between the two clans in the day that was mentioned above, the first peace delegation that arrived at the combat zone was headed by the late Sheikh Abdinasir Haji Ahmed. He headed a group of respected clerics and scholars for an urgent ceasefire, meeting each clan at their base of operation. They accepted his peace declaration. In the latter peace negotiations, the clerics from all over SSC-Khatumo State played positive roles in the reconciliation of the two embattled clans (Bare, August, 12).

### **Customary Rules and Regulation of Wells**

According to Ismail (2025), who is a Somali sociologist and linguist that has a formidable expertise in the local Somali customary law of the community in the different parts of Northeast State of Somalia, the nomads and pastoralist have rules and regulation for the water wells in Sool and Togder regions. Formerly, the Somali nomads used to mark their wells with the brands of their own livestock. Usually, every Somali sub-sub-clan has his own tribal brand.

If a dispute arises over the ownership of a well and a resolution is being sought, the geographical location of the well is taken into account by the mediators.

If the well is located within the territory of a certain clan and is possessed by one of the disputing clans, the newcomers are judged on territorial encroachment and the clan on whose land the well is situated in is ruled for the well's ownership and management because they are the possessors of it.

If the well is situated in a neutral area which is considered as a no clan's land, its ownership is determined based on the sharing of its water and the root cause of the conflict that occurred prior to the fighting over the well's ownership.

If the well was already the subject of an unresolved dispute, its ownership is ruled for the clan that first dug it and had begun using the water of the well. This is verified with the help of local investigators who are famous for truth-telling. Therefore, the plaintiffs and the defendants are separated by the fact-finding investigators who

are familiar with the ins and outs of the disputed over wells. Their determination is based on thorough and just fact-findings.

If the original aquifer of the well's water had already worn out and was replaced with another aquifer by another clan, then according to the Somali customary law, the measurement of the aquifer into the ground becomes the basis for judgment and the well is ruled for whoever that increased its depths.

If the new aquifer of the water source of the well is the same depth as the old aquifer, the well remains under the possession of the original clan that dug it and the second clan is subject to legal judgment and customary punishment.

If the well was a decommissioned well and the newly dug aquifer reached a deeper layer than the first one, the ownership of the well is ruled for the newcomers and its possession is legally transferred to the latter utilisers of it.

If the water well has two outlets of aquifers, the water of the well is often divided among the two clans and they will both utilise the water peacefully.

If a geographical change of a clan territory happened in the location of the wells and the water wells fell into the hands of a clan that is not the former clan that dug the wells and the latter clan owned the wells for a longer time, the ownership of the water wells is ruled for the inhabiting clan in the area. Therefore, the former clan is customarily told to disclaim their possession.

If the water outlets that were dug by the newcomers are more profuse than the erstwhile water outlets of the former clan, the ownership of the wells is ruled for the newcomers and the former clan is informed to disown the said wells.

If the water outlets are the same outlets which were dug by the first diggers of the well, the invested property in the renovation of the well is considered and the ownership of the well is ruled for the original diggers. Despite this, there is a compensation which is allocated for the investors in the said well/wells.

If the newcomers' invested money in the renovation of the well is more than the original owners' capital used for the drilling of the well, two options are tabled for the disputants: bilateral ownership and sharing of the water of the well peacefully or the newcomers' optional giving up of the well's ownership, basing on the territorial possession of the well as per the clan constituency.

If there are many wells and some of the wells are in their original situation and some wells were renovated by the new settlers in the area, while the original clan that possessed them was absent from the territory, the renovated wells are ruled for the new settlers and the un-renovated wells are ruled for the original owners of the water wells that abandoned them before and came back to them.

If the clan that owned the wells formerly has another wells in the area which have sufficient water and their water is not direly needed by the ex-owners, the reasons which forced them to

leave the wells is taken into consideration. As such, a swift legal ruling is avoided by the entrusted neutral arbitrators.

If the two clans are related biologically and the former owners of the wells left the area due to war, the ownership of the original wells is ruled for the previous owners and the possession of all the newly-dug wells is ruled for the new settlers. The two brotherly clans are ordered to utilise the wells peacefully.

If the wells are situated in the frontline and they are located between these two related clans and another rival clan, the ownership of the wells is ruled for both of the related but disputing clans for the sake of their collective territorial defence. This is done in order to prevent the encroachment of the rival clan (the third-party) on the clan constituency of the disputing brotherly clans.

If two clans' dispute over the ownership of a well is taken to the legal decision of impartial arbitrators and the clans fail to reach an agreement and they fight over the well recurrently, the water well is ruled as a no clan's well. So, such a very well is considered as a public well which can be used by all the clans.

If there was a public water well and one man attempts to be the owner of it by any means, the trouble-making man is charged for his intentional violation and irresponsibility. He is punished for his wrongdoing and is forced to compensate for any injury which resulted from his individual mistakes. After that, the water well is ruled as a public well which can be used by all clans. The clan

of the mistaken man and the other clan that is competing with them, are prohibited to arrive at the well with their small arms, light and heavy weapons for some time. Also, they are not allowed to fetch water from the well for their livestock and families as to avoid any kind of confrontation between them. So, the Somali customary law prioritises justice and equality.

### Findings

Firstly, the researcher found out that this intra-clan conflict is a resource-based tribal conflict because it is a water-based conflict between two brotherly clans.

Secondly, the researcher discovered that water is a potential factor which causes inter-clan dispute and intra-clan conflicts in Sool Region of Somalia.

Thirdly, the researcher located that water scarcity is a major conflict driver.

Fourthly, the researcher divulged that the Ugadyahan clan was not happy with the intervention of Somaliland in the peace talks between the two said clans.

Fifthly, the researcher disclosed that this conflict caused loss of human lives.

Sixthly, the researcher detected that this armed conflict was not fully ended.

Seventhly, the researcher unearthed that is possibility of recurrence of it.

Eighthly, the researcher explored that the 2023 Somaliland-SSC-Khatumo destructive armed

conflict pacified this conflict because all the Dulbahante clan, including Siyad Mohamud, united for the war against Somaliland. Thus, when the Lasanod War began on February the 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, the two warring clans put their internal conflict aside and had participated in *Goojacadde Battle* as united brothers in order to defeat their external arch enemy – Somaliland.

Ninthly, the researcher revealed that the two clans are ready to resolve their past conflict and reconcile with one another for the sake of a lasting peace.

Tenthly, the researcher discerned that this lulling conflict is a concern for the wider Dulbahante clan as well as the top administration of Northeast State and the people of Sool Region are ready to get a durable solution to this conflict.

Eleventh, the researcher realised that what begins as a mere dispute over seasonal water points and permanent water wells in Sool Region, escalates into a broader intra-clan conflict and inter-clan violence, resulting in human death, community displacement and economic destruction in Sool Region. As has been identified, environmental factors and poverty are conflict drivers.

Twelfth, the researcher concluded that most of the fighters who died in the two listed clan confrontations were uneducated youths and illiterate young adults.

Thirteenth, the researcher ascertained that this water-based clan conflict resulted in a heartbreaking mental trauma and physical damage to the victims. Whenever such clan

conflicts happen in Somalia in general and in Sool Region in particular, those who lost their loved ones suffer mental trauma and they do not get clinical psychologists and professional psychiatrists to help them heal.

Finally, the trauma caused by this conflict exists in Sool Region to this day.

### Conclusion

This water-based conflict in Sool Region reflects the in-depth interconnection between water scarcity and intra-clan conflicts or inter-clan disputes over the ownership, utility and management of water wells. The limited access to fresh and drinkable water in this semi-arid region in the centre of Northeast State of Somalia, compounded by inadequate infrastructure, underdevelopment, increasing establishment of hamlets in the rural areas and recurrent droughts, impacts on the livelihoods of the pastoralist community. It is an environmental factor which has a negative role in the stability and neighbourliness of the Somali clans and sub-clans because water scarcity causes clan confrontations. The clan confrontations result in casualties, mental trauma, economic and financial destruction. These factors hamper the normality of the livelihood of the community since they sustain the continuation of avenging and revenging.

In conclusion, the negative role that water wells play in intra-clan conflicts and inter-clan wrangles over the ownership of water wells can be

mirrored through *Guba Poetical Chain* which is known as *Silsiladdii Guba* by the Somali people. This poetical discourse created 'words of war' between leading poets from Dulbahante, Ogaden and Isak. Prominent poets like Cali-dhuux (Dulbahante), Qamaan Bulxan (Ogaden) and Salaan-carrabey (Isak) exchanged high-class poems because of Cammuud Water Well in Doollo Region in the Somali Regional State (Ogaden Region) which was previously owned by Ogaden clan, but was taken over by Isak with the weapons they got from the British in the aftermath of the defeat of the Dervish Movement (Elmi, 1989). Thus, wrangles over water wells are negative factors in clan conflicts.

The following poem which was composed by Cali-dhuux Aadan Jaamac, explains how disputes over a water well contributes to intra-clan hostility and inter-clan animosity. This critical poet used poetical apostrophe by explaining the misery of the Ogaden clan which resulted from the seizure of Cammuud Well by the Isak clan. He directly addresses his she-camel which he took it to a well called Ceel-adhi, but rejected to drink from it. Xalane (2005, p. 128).

- *Cartaneey Cammuud layska qaad, ceelki Reer Magane*
- *Hadday curaddadii nool yihiin, waad cabbi lahayde*
- *Nimankii ku caami jiraan, cidi ka noolayne*
- *Cabdillaahi iyo Yuusuf baa, ciidda hoos galaye*
- *Beddel baa cashiir u xigoo, waa cir dabadeede*
- *Raggii calanku saaraan jiriyo, Caliba loo diidye.*

- *Niman baaba Caarshe u noqdiyo, Caamiroo kale'e*
- *Markuu Haybe sida coomir degay, looga soo cararye*
- *Ma la cawryi Reer Yuusuf waa, cirir Ogaadeene?*
- *Miduu caayo miduu cadhiyiyo, miduu carjaameeyo*
- *Saddexdaa calaamuu ka dhigay, cuurki Reer Dalale*
- *Caqli midaan lahayn baa tahaye, hay caloolyeynin*
- *Cayn iyo Hartaad leedahaye, caraqda fuuqfuuqso.*

Translation by the Researcher

- *Oh Cartan<sup>1</sup>, the Cammuud<sup>2</sup> Well of Reer Magan was conquered*
- *Had the first-borns were alive, you would have drunk water from it*
- *None of the gentlemen who used to aid thee drink from it is alive.*
- *Cabdillaahi and Yuusuf were already entombed under the soil*
- *Beddel is the only closest relative and he is as far away as the sky*

- *The respected men and even Cali were rejected to drink from it.*
- *There are men who became like Caarshe<sup>3</sup> and Caamir<sup>4</sup> for it*
- *When Haybe settled there like a lion, it was fled from it for him*
- *Will Reer Yuusuf<sup>5</sup> be cursed as they hail from the auspicious Ogaden?*
- *Some of them are insulted, some are chased and some are humiliated*
- *The numerous Reer Dalal<sup>6</sup> were divided into these three categories*
- *Don't dishearten me as you are a brainless one*
- *As you belong to Cayn and Harti clan, just drink the turbid water.*

## Recommendation

- Resolving this intra-clan conflict peacefully with the goodwill of the Dulbahante clan & coordination of the leadership of Northeast State.
- Analysing the causative factors and underlying drivers of this conflict.
- Prioritising equitable access to drinkable water in the whole region.

<sup>1</sup> Cartan is the she-camel of Poet Cali-dhuux – one of the most famous late Somali poets.

<sup>2</sup> Cammuud is a famous water well in Doollo Region of the Somali Regional State. The well was formerly owned by Reer Magan which is a sub-clan of the Ogaden clan. By the time the poem was composed in 1920s, it was seized by the Isak clan with the help of the British. After that, the Ogaden recaptured it when they defeated the Isak and liberated their territory.

<sup>3</sup> Caarshe was the name that Somalis used to call the British Officer, Captain Allan Gibb, who was killed in Buroa – Togder Region in 1922.

<sup>4</sup> Caamir is Caamir Sheekh Xasan Nuur (Cagoole). He was an influential member of the Dervish Movement's Supreme Council and he was the paternal uncle of Sayid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan – the Founder and the Leader of the Dervish Freedom Fighting Movement.

<sup>5</sup> Reer Yuusuf is a sub-clan of the larger Ogaden clan.

<sup>6</sup> Reer Dalal is a sub-clan of the wider Ogaden clan.

- Promoting culture of peace via orientations and youth employment.
- Fostering inclusive social solidarity and building community trust.
- Enhancing all-inclusive community dialogue at the grass roots level.
- Investing in climate-resilient projects for economic development.
- Improving the general security of the region to get sustainable peace.
- Crafting well-set early warning systems and early action systems.
- Putting long-term peace strategies in place for community safety.
- Demarcating the territorial clan constituency for the sake peace.
- Empowering the law enforcing agencies of the Northeast State of Somalia like the police and the district courts in order to ensure long-term peace and curb on any tribal perpetrators and clan wrongdoers.
- Supporting the orphans who lost their fathers in this conflict and educating them with the state revenues for personal development.
- Putting resource-sharing agreements between the nomads of the two clans since herders' mobility with their livestock for pastures and water cannot be limited and the area suffers recurrent droughts which hit it.
- Drilling modern boreholes with modern rigs for improving water sanitation and supplying enough fresh water to the rural pastoralists.
- Establishing polytechnic colleges and vocational training centres in order to turn illiterate clan fighters into skilled plumbers, electricians, drivers, mechanics, tailors, builders and carpenters who have skills to survive on since lack of job skills attracts them to intra-clan conflicts.
- Forming rehabilitation centres for the victims of this clan conflict.
- Setting clear deadline for compensation and paying blood money.
- To empower peace-building institutions in the urban centres of Northeast State of Somalia for the sake of strong regional stability.
- Holding peace talks for the two sub-clans in a neutral town which is free from the influence of either of the two clans. Boocame is advisable site since there is no historical conflict between Siyad Mohamud and Ugasyo. Therefore, the researcher recommends Boocame to be allocated for the site of the finalisation of this water-based conflict.
- Recognising the role of Somali clerics in clan reconciliations.
- Giving Somali sociologists and anthropologists access to the peace-building and conflict resolution for their Somali cultural expertise.

## References

- Abtidoon, C. (2021).1969. Leicester: Looh Press.
- Bare, A. (2025, August, 12). "Farming is a factor which escalates clan conflict in the rural areas of Sool Region because farmers and herders clash over the utilisation of the

- grazing land. The herders want the land for grazing their livestock and the farmers want the land for their agricultural consumption.”
- Bare, A. (2025, August, 11). “Lasanod is approximately 130 kms to Garowe.”
- CBA TV. (2024). *Qorshihii lagu jabiyay Daraawiish Dagaalkii Jidbaale waxaa lahaa nin Dhulbahante ah (The plan with which the Dervishes were defeated was designed by a man from the Dulbahante clan)* [Interview with Senator Qorane from Isak clan]. Abdinasir (Producer), Waayajoog Show. CBA TV. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbTnAWRy1Ws>
- Constitutional Drafting Committee of Northeast State. (2025). *Constitution of Northeast State of Somalia* [Distributed document]. Constitutional Drafting Committee of Northeast State of Somalia.
- Daud, M. (2025). *Constructive Conflict Resolution*. Nairobi: Avicenna Publishers.
- Elmi, J. (1989). Silsiladdii Guba [Guba poetical chain] [Cassette]. Fiiro Media. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewB9lITAx A>
- Food and Agriculture Organization. (2005). *Somalia: Land and water resources*. FAO Land and Water Division. Available: <https://www.fao.org>.
- Hoehne, M. V. (2015). *Between Somaliland and Puntland: Marginalization, militarization and conflicting political visions*. Rift Valley Institute.
- Idaajaa, A. (2020). *Ismaaciil Mire gabyaagii halgamaaga ahaa [1862 - 1952] (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (Ismail Mire the freedom-fighting poet [1862 - 1952] (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* Leicester: Loo Press.
- Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. (2021). *Baseline Survey on Community Conflicts in Eastern Regions of Somaliland*. Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies.
- Ismail, A. (2021, November, 29). “Delay of the payment of blood money is a root cause of clan conflict in Sool Region because it leads to tribal revenges.”
- Ismail, Y. (2025). *The Customary Law of the Wells* [Unpublished manuscript]. Gateway Secondary School.
- Ismail, Y. (2025, August, 4). “Seven men were killed at Jidbale and 21 men were killed at Dabardalol. The two clans didn’t sign full peace agreement in Yagori because Somaliland meddled in their peace process forcefully.”
- Loyan, M. (2025, August, 10). “The root cause of the conflict is Somaliland’s attempt for mining gold and other minerals at Boocda under the cover of drilling water boreholes. The people of Hudun fought against that sheer theft.”
- Menkhaus, K. (2003). *State collapse in Somalia: Second thoughts. Review of African Political Economy*, 30(97), 405–422. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2003.9659773>
- Mukhtar, M. H. (2003). *Historical dictionary of Somalia*. Lanham, Maryland, and Oxford: Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Osman, J. (2025, August, 8). “The two clans agreed upon the mechanism of conflict resolution but the signing of the peace agreement was delayed because there are pending issues between the two clans which existed prior to the conflict and the war of Lasanod also interrupted the peace process since the two clans united for fight against Somaliland which is an external enemy.”
- ReliefWeb. (2023). *Somalia road network and access constraints*. Available: <https://reliefweb.int>
- Somali Academy of Science, Culture and Arts. (2022). *Sool Region* (Unpublished manuscript). Somali Academy of Science, Culture and Arts.

- Somali National News Agency. (2025). *North East State of Somalia Adopts New Constitution in Historic Conference*. Available: <https://sonna.so/en/north-east-state-of-somalia-adopts-new-constitution-in-historic-conference/>
- SLNTV. (2021). Weftigii Wasirada Ee Gobolka Sool Oo hadhimo sharafeed loogu sameeyay Deegaanka Dibshabeel ee G/Sool (Banquet was prepared for the Delegation of Ministers from Sool Region in Dibshabeel location). Available: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lTh\\_tKuNXwA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lTh_tKuNXwA)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2022). *Somalia: Access map*. UNOCHA. <https://www.unocha.org>
- Xalane, X. C. (2003). *Far-Guri (Ancient script)*. Minneapolis: Himilo Publishing Company.