



**CONFLICT  
DYNAMICS®**  
INTERNATIONAL

## Quarterly Update —

Summer 2021



*Participant of a regional focus group in Mogadishu*

### **Dear Friends of Conflict Dynamics,**

It's hard to imagine that we are approaching 18 months of living with COVID-19 and its devastating effects.

While there is much that the pandemic has laid bare in terms of inequality and exclusion – extending even into access to vaccinations for those who want them – there is also much that the pandemic has illuminated that brings people together and shows how people are helping each other. We see that every day in our work.

It is true that wars do not stop for pandemics, and neither does work for peace. In the past few months we have continued our work supporting courageous people seeking, sometimes against the odds, to make change towards a better future, whether at national or local levels.

We know that when people are excluded from political, economic and social opportunities, it is strife and conflict that follow. It is why we continue to engage with people to make inclusion work in practice. If opportunities for inclusion are closed off, sooner or later more conflict will follow. The current situation in Afghanistan shows us that when international support fails, people rely on each other and the resilience of their communities to seek peaceful and sustainable solutions to complex issues.

In addition to our work for peace, we have in the last months started a new collaboration with Save the Children International to help people affected by humanitarian crisis. The pandemic has constrained international humanitarian relief efforts, and that all the more shows the importance of supporting national

humanitarian capacities, which we are proud to do.

We all have a long distance to go to weather the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to staying the course to continue to support peace and humanitarian action when and where it is needed most. We are as always grateful for your support to enable our work.

Thank you,

**Gerard Mc Hugh**  
**Founder and President**

## Where In The World Is Conflict Dynamics?



**VIRTUAL** - On 1 April, Conflict Dynamics along with the [Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law](#) presented a webinar titled '[Using the Political Accommodation Methodology to Address Root Causes of Conflict](#)'. Conflict Dynamics' President Gerard Mc Hugh, Sudan Program Director Mai Tarig Amir, and Somali Program Director Roger Middleton each presented lessons learned on how the methodology is used in their respective contexts to address exclusion as a key driver of conflict. Thirty nine peace practitioners and fellow grantees of the Netherlands Addressing Root Causes Fund attended the event from a variety of different contexts, each sharing valuable experiences on how they engage with the Political Accommodation Methodology, opportunities to apply it in their contexts, and the potential change it can bring.



**DHARKENLEY, SOMALIA** - Conflict Dynamics welcomes to creation of a Land Dispute Committee in Dharkenley by the US Agency for International Development's Expanding Access to Justice Program. Conflict Dynamics and the [Somali Youth Development Network](#) are committed to supporting local conflict resolution initiatives through the establishment and support of District Peace Committees (DPC) throughout Somalia, including Dharkenley. The Dharkenley DPC has successfully played a mitigating role in disputes over the occupation of houses abandoned during the civil war and now will have a greater capacity through collaboration with the new Land Dispute Committee to resolve a variety of issues in a peaceful and localized manner.

📍: US Embassy Mogadishu, Somalia



**SOMALIA** - Conflict Dynamics' Somali Team performed a series of key informant interviews in Galmudug, Jubaland, and Hirshabelle to continue informing our work through local perspectives. The goal of these interviews was to understand how various stakeholders perceive the implementation of federalism in Somalia as well as their vision for the future of this work in their country. We aim to use the information gained from these interviews to produce discussion papers that will promote continued dialogue and debate amongst those living and working in Somalia about the best way forward in creating inclusive, locally-derived systems of governance. Keep an eye out for our forthcoming products!



**BOSTON, MA, USA** - Conflict Dynamics congratulates Nanako Tamaru on her new position as the Executive Director of [the Boston Network for International Development](#) (BNID). Starting at Conflict Dynamics as a research assistant on governance and peacebuilding, Nanako spent many subsequent years as a program officer working on peacebuilding programs and research in Syria, Somalia, and other contexts. Nanako continues to work with Conflict Dynamics, offering her expertise and insight on gender, inclusive peacebuilding, and sustainable governance arrangements. Congratulations Nanako!

📍: BNID

## What is Happening on the Ground?



## Strengthening Humanitarian Engagement Capacities of Practitioners

Conflict Dynamics' Humanitarian Engagement and Access Program (HEA) and our Children in Armed Conflict Program are excited to announce the beginning of a new collaboration with [Save the Children International](#). The focus of this collaboration is

on strengthening the capacity of Save the Children humanitarian practitioners as well as practitioners from their partner organizations to carry out effective humanitarian negotiations. This work is about improving how practitioners engage with governments, armed groups, and others that influence humanitarian conditions and access. Conflict Dynamics, alongside the [Harvard Humanitarian Initiative](#), is developing and designing new tools and curricula based on years of experience and lessons learned on how to navigate the current humanitarian environment and how to conduct more effective humanitarian engagement.

Conflict Dynamics and Save the Children will be working with practitioners from different contexts throughout Sub-Saharan Africa to tackle the access challenges they face in their work and develop effective methods for humanitarian engagement. This is an exciting collaboration which leverages our years of experience at the forefront of efforts to improve humanitarian engagement and to protect children in times of conflict. Save the Children and Conflict Dynamics both have a long history in the field of children and armed conflict, specifically regarding accountability mechanisms for children in conflict settings. Save the Children's recent publication [Mapping of Child Protection Accountability Mechanisms in Armed Conflict in Africa](#) relies on Conflict Dynamics' unique definition of accountability, covered in Conflict Dynamics' [Children in Armed Conflict Accountability Framework](#).

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### **Preparing for a New Upper House of Parliament in Somalia**

Elections for the Upper House of the Somali parliament have begun in four of the Federal Member States. As of August 30, the states of Puntland and South West had completed their selection processes. While these developments are promising, completing the electoral process for the four-year-old legislative body will continue to prove difficult.

Although the Upper House has been established since 2016, there remains confusion on the roles, responsibilities, and powers among the general public. The Somali Team is working through consultations, research, and technical discussions to identify points of contention and lack of clarity from a constitutional perspective. Through the use of tools such as case studies and analytical products, the Somali Team will demonstrate the opportunities and areas of possibility that a new Upper House and other mechanisms can offer for creating a political system that meets the unique needs of Somalia.

To help guide future Somali elections, the Somali Team is producing several case studies comparing upper house elections in various countries. When conducting the analysis for these cases, the team first delved into the context regarding the



formulation of each country's federal model and then later on how they have molded elections and selections for the upper house. Keep an eye out for the case study compilation examining contexts including Canada, Nigeria, Pakistan, Germany, Belgium, Somalia, and Somaliland. In addition to being available to the public, the case studies will be used for roundtable discussions regarding public perception of elections, involving both political representatives and youth groups.

📍: African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) / Tobin Jones

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### **Supporting Preparation for the Conference on the System of Governance in Sudan**

On 27-29 April, Conflict Dynamics participated as a facilitator in a technical workshop convened by the Transitional Government of Sudan in preparation for conducting the Conference on the System of Governance, which is mandated by the Juba Peace Agreement. Conflict Dynamics' Sudan Team was able to provide input, guidance, and support to attendees to think through how women and youth can effectively participate and play a role in the various phases of the transition process. The workshop included over 300 participants representing the government, political parties, peace actors, traditional leaders, academics, and civil society; all of whom were chosen by their constituencies. Missing from attendance were some actors still outside of the Juba Peace Agreement, including the High Council of Beja Nazirs and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al Hilu.

The workshop focused on drafting and discussing a range of options for the design of the consultative process and outlining the main issues that the conference will focus on, including type of federal system, questions of autonomy within the system, geographic boundaries, and local governance. Following the workshop, attendees returned to their communities to hold consultations at the state and local levels. Each state has been requested to draft plans for engaging with a wide range of constituencies. Attendees plan to reconvene in an assessment meeting to develop a comprehensive road map for the conference.

## Employee Spotlight

*We are very grateful for the work of our summer Research Assistants. Allow us to introduce our five newest team members!*



**Jake Arce**

Research Assistant, Somali Program

Meet Jake, who primarily works as a member of Conflict Dynamics' Somali Team. He is conducting research on federalism in Somalia and the use of dialogue to help uncover common ground in conflict zones. Jake will also be supporting research on the Peace Action Program Area, including contributing to Conflict Dynamics' Peace Pulse and a series of case studies for the Political Accommodation Methodology.

Jake is currently a Master's candidate in International Affairs at the American University School of International Service with a focus on International Peace and Conflict Resolution and a specialization in International Negotiation. He also has a supplemental focus on US Foreign Policy and National Security. Prior to joining Conflict Dynamics, Jake interned at ARDD-Legal Aid, in Amman, Jordan, conducting research on the Syrian Refugee Crisis. He also spent a summer in a language program in Beirut, Lebanon and has spent some of his formative years in Damascus, Syria.

Outside of Conflict Dynamics and his studies, Jake works at GWL: Voices for Change and Inclusion where he conducts research on ways to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 and the fundamental



**Yasser Adam**

Research Assistant, Sudan Program

Say hello to Yasser Adam, a new member of the Sudan Program. Originally from Darfur, Yasser will provide valuable insight and experience to the work of the Sudan Team and contribute to the development of products which will provide guidance throughout the transition process.

Yasser is currently a Master's candidate in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University and he has an undergraduate degree in Governance and Development. He brings with him over 12 years of experience in emergency response, disaster management, community empowerment, civic engagement, good governance, peace, and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Before coming to Conflict Dynamics, Yasser volunteered with the Sudanese Church Council and worked for various organizations including the Danish Refugee Council, ActionAid, UNICEF, and the United States Institute of Peace.

His work at Conflict Dynamics is just one aspect of how Yasser pursues his goal of using his experiences and knowledge to advocate, lobby, network, and campaign with other actors and collectively to

principles from the Beijing Declaration in global contexts. In his free time, Jake likes to watch soccer and roots for the Tottenham Hotspurs. He also likes to read and enjoys weight lifting.

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enhance social justice, inclusion, and equality, to contribute to national cohesion and create a conducive social, political, and economic coexistence while bringing peace to Sudan.

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**Beth Alexion**

Research Assistant,  
Sudan Program and Humanitarian  
Engagement and Access Program

Conflict Dynamics welcomes Beth, who supports both the Sudan Team and the HEA Team. Beth works on aspects of Political Accommodation in Sudan as well as supports the contextualization of Conflict Dynamics' upcoming humanitarian workshops on increasing the engagement capacity of humanitarian practitioners.

Beth has recently graduated from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University where she studied international conflict resolution, human security, and gender analysis. Her thesis explored the role of social media, online hate speech and disinformation in conflict and their implications for peace processes.

Prior to her work at Conflict Dynamics, Beth was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia teaching English in a rural high school. She later worked with the International Rescue Committee on gender-based violence response and prevention programs in Eritrean refugee camps. Since the beginning of the



**Asa Cooper**

Research Assistant, Somali Program

Conflict Dynamics is excited to introduce Asa, a research assistant on the Somali Program. Asa is currently conducting research for projects surrounding localized conflict resolution mechanisms in South and Central Somalia.

Asa is currently a Master's candidate at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where he studies Human Security and Conflict Resolution. His current academic focus is on inclusive governance in East Africa, with an emphasis on Somali politics. After his studies, he hopes to continue to work with peacebuilding organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Prior to Conflict Dynamics and his studies at Tufts University, Asa studied International Affairs in France where he worked for an NGO assisting refugees in Paris. His experience working with migrants who were forced from their homes directed his interests towards working in conflict and post-conflict settings. He subsequently completed an internship with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, where he narrowed his interests to development in fragile

current conflict in Tigray, Beth has remained engaged with a group of former Peace Corps volunteers advocating for a response to the humanitarian crisis and human rights abuses.

In her free time, she enjoys playing and watching soccer, running and hiking, and looks forward to hanging out in coffee shops again after the pandemic.

contexts.

Outside of his work and studies, Asa enjoys running, reading, and surfing at the beach in Los Angeles where he has been living during the pandemic. He is looking forward to meeting the classmates and colleagues he has enjoyed learning from and with over the past year.

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**Lauren McGowan**

Research Assistant, Sudan Program

Join us in welcoming Lauren to Conflict Dynamics' Sudan Team. Lauren is providing research support, particularly looking at the role of women in peacebuilding. She also provides research support to the Peace Action Program Area, including the production and dissemination of the Peace Pulse publication.

Lauren is currently a graduate student at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, focusing on conflict resolution and human rights. Prior to joining Conflict Dynamics, Lauren completed her undergraduate studies at Rutgers University, earning degrees in Political Science and Spanish. She formerly worked at Amnesty International as a project manager.

Outside of her studies and work, Lauren enjoys playing soccer and watching the Premier League, especially her favorite team Manchester United. She also enjoys hiking and reading.

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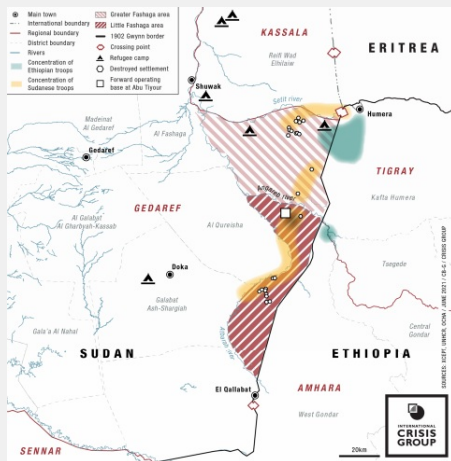
*Are you interested in joining our team of Research Assistants for the upcoming academic year?*

*Respond to our [vacancy announcement](#) by 6 September 2021!*

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**What are We Reading at Conflict Dynamics?**





### **Containing the Volatile Sudan-Ethiopia Border Dispute**

*International Crisis Group*

This article addresses the alarming rise in military tension within the borders of Ethiopia and Sudan. The hostility arises at a time of internal conflict in both states, potentially hindering peace initiatives that could have formed since the start of the dispute in al-Fashaga.

Authors call for the African Union, the United Arab Emirates, the European Union, and the United States to facilitate diplomatic engagement between the two parties. In addition to peaceful negotiation, there is also an urge for the prevention of further military deployment and the creation of open channels for de-escalation.

The article concludes by stating that both countries should seek to form an agreement on al-Fashaga, which closely resembles the compromise that was agreed upon in the 2007-2008 period. By doing so, this will promote tranquility in the area, and will also enhance confidence building measures between the two parties to restart negotiations.

### **UN Presidential Statement of concern about the devastating impact of COVID-19 on Africa**

*United Nations Security Council*

In a recent press release from the United Nations Security Council, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres highlighted the link between the global pandemic and international conflict. The Secretary-General referenced disproportionate vaccine distribution and economic ramifications as main factors contributing to increased violence, particularly in Africa. As of 19 May 2021, Africa had received just two per cent of the vaccine doses administered globally.

In April 2020, there were reports that up to 40 million Africans were pushed back into extreme poverty following the COVID-19 outbreak. A buildup of vaccine supply and greater investment to enhance governance can accelerate economic relief and create a pathway towards creating peace.

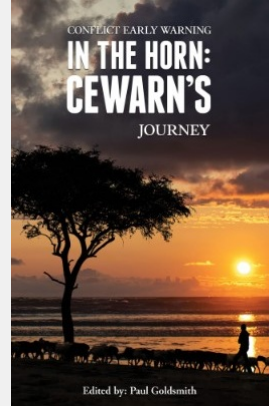
For more resources on the COVID-19 vaccine and the impact on peacebuilding, read the [latest edition of Conflict Dynamics' Peace Pulse](#).



## How Can Federalism Work in Somalia?

*Subeida Mukhtar*

Conflict Dynamics' Somali Program member Subeida Mukhtar delves into the perceptions, understandings, and trust of federalism felt by Somalis throughout the country, making the case for how it could work in her home country. Subeida draws on her extensive personal and professional experience with Somali politics to outline the history, benefits, and challenges of establishing such a system and the next steps to move the process forward. Subeida believes 'federalism deserves an opportunity to prove its worth', read on to find out why.



## Conflict Early Warning in the Horn: CEWARN'S Journey

*Paul Goldsmith*

Within this collection, Executive Director of Conflict Dynamics' partner SOYDEN, Osman Moalim, has co-authored a piece on 'The History of Somalia's CEWERU Establishment'. Along with co-authors Adan Bare and Hashi Adan Bare, he outlines the District Peace Committees' evolving relationship with local, regional, and intergovernmental authorities, including the national early warning system of Somalia, and covers ways to improve this collaboration to strengthen mechanisms for peacebuilding.

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