

## Review Article

# Assessment of Conflict Dynamics in Somali National Regional State of Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** This article intended to assess conflict dynamics in Somali region based on secondary data, personal interviews and group discussions that was held in Gode, Kebridahar, Jigjiga and Dendema towns. Accordingly, the root causes of the post 1991 ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia associated with nation building process and centralization of power in Ethiopia and power sharing conflicts. The theoretical ground of this study claims that the conflict in Somali region is a clash between conflict actors over scarce resources and political power. After 2016 the conflict dynamics and the reasons for internal displacement in Somali region was changed since it was triggered by conflict between Somali-Oromia over access resource and regional boundaries. Data from IOM in 2018 indicate that around 61,907 internally displaced households due to Somali-Oromia conflict live in government collective centers majority in Qoloji (Babile), Moyale and Dire-Dawa. From the beginning the main actors of the conflict in the region includes armed clans, clan elders, local administrative, ONLF force, WSLF force, OLF force, regional polices, and federal military. In the general context, the Somali region conflict dynamics can be affected in the future by Oil and minerals extraction potential of the region, land resource and ownership, inequities in levels of development between and within regions of the country, Woreda or administrative distributions among the Somali-clans, political power division, and regional volatile political issues.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Ethnic Conflict, Government, Resources, Somali, Ethiopia

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Violent conflict is the norm in the Horn of Africa. Conflicts are waged at various levels: state, regional, and local. Conflict in the Horn of Africa involves various actors: governments, nationalist groups, religious groups, and community or identity groups with significant backing from external forces. It is a common for conflicts in the sub-region to promptly acquire a sub-regional dimension, thus transcending national borders by attracting kinsmen from across the border in the Horn of Africa [21].

Ethiopia is a land locked country of 91.73 million people, located in the Horn of Africa and bordered by Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan. Following the political transition of 1991, Ethiopia introduced the Constitution of the Federal Democratic

Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) that resulted in the creation of nine regional states and two city administrations. Four of these regions are Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella which are considered as Developing Regional States (DRS) due to their historical marginalization and low levels of development in comparison to more advantaged regions of the country [23].

The Somali regional state<sup>1</sup> located in the eastern Ethiopian lowlands borders the Ethiopian regions of Oromia and Afar to the west, as well as Djibouti to the north, Somalia to the north, east and south and Kenya to the southwest. Somali regional state has 11 administrative

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<sup>1</sup> In August, 2018 the name of the region has been changed to "Somali State"

zones and made up of 93 *woredas*<sup>2</sup> and six administrative towns [24]. The region is almost entirely inhabited by people of Somali ethnicity (95.6 percent) which is predominantly Moslem pastoralists (85 percent), total population of the region was estimated as 5.37 million [6]. The population size of Somali region is highly disputed, with allegations that the 1994 census findings were reduced from as much as 9.2 or 7.5<sup>3</sup> million to 4.5<sup>4</sup> million, the basic reason of this much differences in the population size is not known.

Historically, the Somali-inhabited area of Ethiopia has been known as the Ogaden region<sup>5</sup>. The name Ogaden belongs to the largest Somali sub-clan living in the Somali region. It also gave its name to the war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977/78. After 1991 the name of the region has been changed in to Somali Regional State, also known as Region 5.

The pattern of conflict in the Somali region is complex, with several factors contributing to the perpetuation of conflicts. The region is affected by long standing conflicts shaped by a number of factors including its peripheral location, inequities in levels of development between and within region, the volatility and influx of refugees from border countries, recurrent flooding and drought, the presence of multiple political interest groups (Ethio-Somalia issues<sup>6</sup>, ESDP<sup>7</sup>, ONLF<sup>8</sup>, WSLF<sup>9</sup>, others), weak governance, and limited social services. This has weakened the legitimacy of the Ethiopian state amongst the population in this region and low levels of social cohesion have undermined community resilience against various shocks and stresses.

The region is undergoing a gradual but important transition that has multiple implications concerning violent conflict. There are many implications of shift at multiple levels of society; which is community-based conflict and leads to new drivers of conflict in addition to conventional drivers in the future [7]. Conflicts in Somali region revolve around governance, economics and social inequality. Clan dynamics strongly resemble ethnic divisions elsewhere and are the major underlying barrier to social cohesion. Clans disagree internally on regional power of politics and allegiances. Identity conflicts between clans take on a dimension of racial or occupational discrimination<sup>10</sup>.

Scarcity of resources (mainly water, grazing land) has increased hostilities and violence between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Somali region and neighbouring regions. Growing populations of both people and livestock have not been matched by equal expansion of social services, a problem

which has been compounded by an influx of refugees. Somali people also have several protracted trans-boundary conflicts with the regional states of Afar and Oromia. The districts of Moyale, Meiso, Babile, Mayu-muluko, and Tulli-Guled are the most active conflict sites between Oromia and Somali, with currently ongoing conflict.

## 1.2. Objectives and Methodology

This Article assesses the conflict dynamics in Somali regional state of Ethiopia, with particular emphasis on the potential drivers of conflict and instability, causes of conflict and makes policy recommendations to the regional and federal Governments. The design of this study was based on qualitative research conducted in Somali regional state in July and August, 2018. It combines field research conducted in the Gode, Kebridahar, Jigjiga and Dendema (Babile Somali) based on interviews with community elders and significant literature review on conflict in the region.

## 2. Discussions

### 2.1. Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia

Ethiopian federalism approach and country's constitution has given greater autonomy to ethnic communities that help them to manage their affairs [8]. The EFDRE constitution sanctions decentralized and autonomous regional administrations; however, political praxis has been at odds with these principles.

Ethiopia's ethnic regions generate continuing controversy regarding their long-term effects on the country's integrity in past since 1991 and for the coming future. At one extreme, some predict that the centrifugal dynamics of Ethiopia's exclusive sub national identities will lead to the country's disintegration, because of the new Ethiopian constitution article 39 guarantees Ethiopian National Regional States the right to self-determination up to secession.

Abdi Ismail (writer) cite the "former Soviet Union as a model: First, when central government is weakened authoritarian and ethnically divided societies inter into ethnic-based conflict. Second, supporters of the ethnically based dispensation note that the new federalism is a novel departure for Ethiopia that cannot be reversed despite teething problems. Third, other critics claim that the dominant party at the center has reneged on its democratic promise by illegally subverting free ethnic political mobilization".

All three claims have their own advantages and disadvantages. An implosion of the federal system could become a reality if national leaders and regional authorities are unable to produce a legitimate political and economic system that matches the aspirations of different ethnic groups in the country. Evidence from current studies suggests that those in power in ethnic organizations in the regions have their own regional independence agendas [19].

According to some study finding like [25] current Ethiopian political debates indicate that the dominant political party and economic practice will determine the viability of ethnic

2 Woreda is a unit of administrative structure in Ethiopia and it has equal weight with district

3 Data from 1999 census conducted by Ethiopian Statistical Agency

4 Data from 2004 census

5 The name of the region before 1991

6 The idea of Great Somalia

7 Ethiopian Somali Democratic Party is current ruling party of the region

8 Ogaden National Liberation Front

9 Western Somali Liberation Front

10 Source data from: [www.unicef.org/ethiopia](http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia)

federalism. Before 2018, the preeminent party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and its affiliate, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), have a strategic role in determining the longevity, character, and vitality of a federated Ethiopia. Current research finding like [25] argue that governing party's accomplishments are portrayed in one of two ways. Some describe the TPLF as liberating and democratizing and others make argument against that conniving, but all finding agree on that Tigray ultimately dominated system [15]. These studies rarely examine the internal dynamics of ethnic regions to assess the actual balance of power between the central government and the regions.

## **2.2. Ethnic-Conflict in Post-Federal Ethiopia: The Case of Somali and Oromia**

### **2.2.1. New Federalism and Interest Based Conflict**

The historical process underlying in the creation of the modern Ethiopia state has been marked by power struggles and conflictual cleavages among diverse forces. Group based consolidating political sovereignty under a centralized authority is common political system in Ethiopian history this has been great challenges, asserted local supremacy and resisted consolidation between two ethnic and political groups which leads to small and medium scale intra and inter-local frictions that develop into a situation of conflict.

The new political dynamics generated by Ethiopia's division into ethnic regions. Specifically, it demonstrates that the central government's attempts to tightly control regional political processes undermine the essence of regional self-rule. Although, the federal constitution mandates the regional government self-ruling and self-determination power up to secession. But, the situation more precarious, inept regional governments waste opportunities to enhance regional autonomy. The evidence has been gathered from the Somali Region where different federal government intervention has been observed since 1991 which causes regional conflict and instability.

The study finding of different research shows the clear picture of the root causes of the post 1991 ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia related with historical description of the pre and post 1991 nation building process and centralization of power in Ethiopia and power sharing conflicts between federal and regional ethnic based conflicts.

Even though, the primary agenda of the EPRDF in formulating ethnic-based federalism was to address inter-ethnic conflictual problems in the country, many ethnic conflicts have been occurred after 1991. The major post 1991 inter-ethnic conflicts observed in Ethiopia are: the Silte-Gurage conflict, the Wagagoda language conflict, the Sheko-Megengir conflict, the Anuak-Nuer conflict, the Berta-Gumuz conflict, and the Gedeo-Guji conflict, the Oromo-Amhara conflict, the Oromo-Somali conflict, the Oromo-Tigre conflict and Somali-Afar conflict [22].

### **2.2.2. Drivers of Somali-Oromo Conflict**

The Somali-Oromo and Somali-Afar conflict refers was mainly due to the dissatisfactions of their groups on the uses and allocations of pasturelands and water resources in the area which is aggravated by draught, famine, and external intervention for geopolitical strategic interests, poverty etc. Somali pastoralist and Oromo-Afar pastoral people are mainly rooted in traditional cattle raiding and competitions on pasturelands and water resources which have transformed themselves in to frontier conflicts after the state restructural reform of post 1991 [2 Cited in 22 ].

The Oromo-Somali conflict which manifested violently for many years and finally the House of Federation interfered through conducting a referendum which was held in 2007 to solve ethnic based conflictual problems that was attributes to poverty, famine, competition on natural resources, difficulties in resolving the ethnic lines of the border between Oromia and the Somali Regions [17]. Similarly, external factors like civil wars in Somalia that caused population flows in Somali regional state and different politically interested groups like ONLF, WSLF and OLF that was trained in Eretria and Somalia cause conflict between Somali-Oromo peoples in Ethiopia this is why the Somali-Oromo conflict is quite complicated in the past.

Ministry of Federal Affairs mediated the two regional states and reached agreements to resolve the boundary claims existed between them by referendum in March 2004. Based on the agreement signed the referendum has taken place in October 2004, in the 456 kebeles<sup>11</sup>. Accordingly, the following problems and challenges are identified as causes; lack of preparations for the referendum, disarmament was not respected, illegal campaign for the referendum, new settlement in areas of conflicts, lack of facilitators of supporting committees, deliberate acting of violence when the referendum taking place, lagging of the demarcation process, manipulation of certain places without vote, lack of cooperation from the regional and local administration bodies [20; 11]. Due to the above problems the referendum did not bring solution; instead it intensifies the conflict and the violence into a full-fledged war.

In general context, the major causes of conflicts between the Somali-Oromo in Ethiopia can be classified as socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural scenarios. The current Oromo-Somali conflict (Starting from January 2015 up to September 2018) was based on border political dispute which can be considered as competition over resource, demand for ethnic self-assertion and related difficulties of ethnic boundary delimitations plus political disagreement between the two regional ruling party's leaders. Therefore, it is implausible to argue that an ethnic difference is the only causes of conflict between Somali and Oromia.

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11 Lowest level administrative units in Ethiopia

*Table 1. Timeline of Conflict-related Events in Somali region of Ethiopia.*

Time period	Basic Conflict-related Events
Early 1900s	Migration of Oromo pastoralist from western Hararghe highlands to access grasslands for their livestock in to Shinile zone of Somali region that creates conflict between Oromo-Somali pastoralists.
1930-35	Italy attacks Ethiopia from Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. Government allocates of 500 ha of land in Meiso to two private investors and large pasture lands are fenced which create conflict between government and Somali pastoralists.
1970-74	Commander of armed forces in eastern Ethiopia encourages Oromo and Afar to attack Somali (Issa and Hawiye) on borders. Somali-Issa wells are reported to be deliberately poisoned by army, with livestock and human deaths, which leads to Somali and Oromo becoming enemies.
1974-76	1974 land reform puts all land under state ownership. Landlords are dispossessed, Somali pastoralist organize attacks during the planting and harvesting seasons to try to secure extensive communal grazing land.
1976-78	The Siad Barre regime in Somalia trains the Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF) in preparation for invasion of Ethiopia. In 1977, Siad Barre launched the war against Ethiopia, from July 1977 until March 1978 the battle between Ethiopia and Somali for Somali region was the hottest war on earth, number of death due to this war was estimated to 91,000 people including 25,000 civilians, 357,388 refugees from Ogaden region (Somali region of Ethiopia) was registered by International Aid Organization.
1984-91	The period is characterized by supply of automatic weapons for Ethiopian Ethnic-groups. The Oromo are supplied by the Ethiopian government; Somalia and Djibouti supply the Somali in Ethiopia. The establishment of Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) with leaders drawn from the Somalia to fight in the region. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) establishment to support Oromo fighting.
1991-2006	Formation of the Somali Regional State occurs, bordered by Oromia and Afar Regions, but with borders in key areas left undefined and dispute between Somali-Oromia, Somali-Afar emerges over control of Border areas. These events lead to a referendum in November 2004, which also became the source of conflict again.
2006-15	The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia is increasingly under pressure from the militarized Islamic Courts Union. Ethiopia views the rise of Islamic groups as a threat to national sovereignty and the Ethiopian army moves into Somalia in 2006 to support the TFG. In April 2007, the ONLF attacks a Chinese-run oil field in Abole, Somali Region, killing approximately 65 Ethiopians and 9 Chinese nationals. A large-scale counter-insurgency operation is launched by the Ethiopia, with military operations which killed many civilians in Fik, Deghabur, Warder, Korahe, and Gode Zones, and related restrictions on humanitarian agencies. Formation of Somali region Liyu-police in 2007 following ONLF attacks and their military operations.
2015-present	Somali-Oromia issues: ethnic based conflict between Somali and Oromia causes hundred deaths and around 161,538 internally displaced households. Regional political tension caused by removing of regional president Mr. Abdi Mohamed Omar from his position and the issue of Somali regional Liyu-police.

Source: Catley and Iyasu, 2010; Ahmed Shide, 2005

### 2.2.3. Somali-Oromia Conflict Displacement Situation

The humanitarian situation in Ethiopia has been further exacerbated by an upsurge in conflict around the border areas of Oromia and Somali regions, since early September 2017 the conflict between Oromos and Somalis has left hundreds of thousands displaced people, and many more death and injury, often in areas already experiencing ongoing drought-related humanitarian need. Nearly all districts along the regional borders like Moyale, Meiso, Babile, Tulli-Guled, Mayu-muluko, Kubi, and Salahad were affected by this conflict.

According to the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) estimate, around 857,000 people had been displaced by the Somali-Oromia conflict (this includes displacements recorded prior to August-September). Preliminary data<sup>12</sup> of the IOM Displacement conducted in November 2017 indicates that around 1 million persons have been displaced due to conflict along the Oromia-Somali regional border (nearly 700,000 in 2017 alone, with a significant spike after September 2017).

The conflict IDP<sup>13</sup>s are settled in close to 400 locations, either in IDP sites, with host communities or in “collective

centers” along the border areas and in major towns or villages across Oromia, Somali, Harar regions, and Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa cities. Around 637,000 IDPs (60 per cent) are living in 145 spontaneous or planned camps/sites in the border areas. This includes 68,000 Somali IDPs – displaced between mid-2015 and end 2017 - living in *Qolaji* IDP site located in Babile District (Babile Somali) on the Jijiga-Harar road [18].

Around 100,000 IDPs live in government collective centers in Oromia regional state with most of the largest sites being located in major towns: Addis Ababa (2,500), Dire Dawa (4,700), Harar (4,500), Adama (3,100), and Chiro (4,700). Similarly, around 4,000 Somali IDPs are also located in a youth recreation center of Dire Dawa Administration. At least 256,000 IDPs live amongst host communities or relatives in the border areas or dispersed in the two regions, including around 5,000 Oromos displaced from Somaliland and dispersed in various locations in Oromia region [18].

In both regions IDPs remain in unsafe conditions both in their live and livelihood security, fully dependent on Government and international humanitarian assistance and generosity of the host community, which often times are themselves vulnerable due to recurrent drought impact. The needs of the displaced population significantly vary according to past livelihoods and the displacement categories. Whereas, those displaced in spontaneous sites like that of *Qolaji* are mainly pastoralists, those in transit and collective centers are mainly those displaced from cities and major towns, and who

12 In October, the National Disaster and Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) proposed to use the IOM Displacement collected primary data that was conducted between November and December 2017 as the main information source to confirm IDP's locations and numbers.

13 Internal Displaced People

were engaged in various professions. Across the board, the conflict and subsequent populations' displacements have generated major protection concerns.

After 2016 the conflict dynamics and displacement was changed since it was triggered by conflict between Somali-Oromia over access to political power and regional boundaries. BBC has also reported that some 70,000 people have fled their homes to a remote part of southern Ethiopia, after a deadly conflict broke out between Oromo and Somali clans. Recently, in September 2017, there was a clash in the Moyale district involving, in which more than 30,000 people crossed into Kenya to escape the fighting and dozens have been killed.

According to OCHA, IOM and NDRMC at the end of October, around 60,000 Somali IDPs were believed to have been returned to their villages of origin in Moyale district and that most recent report also indicate IDPs in Guchi district (Borana zone, Oromia region) returned to their areas of origin. However, recurrent instability in these areas may not make their return sustainable. Generally, the problem of the Somali-Oromia conflict was mainly motivated and influenced by these post-1991 political developments and changes that marked a turning point in the political history of the modern ethnic-based Ethiopian states.

#### 2.2.4. The Somali-Afar Conflict

Similar to that of Somali-Oromo conflict the Somali-Afar conflict is the violent conflicts due to the dissatisfactions of the Somali-Issa and Hawiye groups (around Meiso and Adheyto) mostly on the uses and allocations of pasturelands and water resources which is aggravated by draught, famine, external intervention for geopolitical strategic interests, poverty etc. This conflict is attributed to variables similar to that of the Borana-Gerri; both are mainly rooted in traditional cattle raiding and competitions on pasturelands and water resources which have transformed themselves in to frontier

conflicts after the state restructuring reform of post 1991 [2].

Resource-based conflicts are part of the livelihoods-conflict cycle between Somali-Afar pastoralists; the situation has become more complicated due to governance factors. A further complication is that in part, resource-based conflicts are due to land tenure policies and laws which favour the private acquisition of land and cultivation over communal, pastoralist use of land. In other words, formal policy is itself also a cause of resource depletion for pastoralists and therefore a source of conflict [5].

Due to uncaredful design of pastoral policy conflict triggers may happen. For example, a post-drought restocking programme targeted at only one group would be high risk and may leads to conflict between Issa, Hawiyya, Afar, and Oromo groups. If the Issa pastoralist system is mapped out, it becomes clear that conflict and change in one part of the system can have knock-on effects elsewhere depending on the level of pressure. Pastoral scarce resources in Afar and putting many places which were previously accessible to Afars out of their reach were basic conflict drivers between Somali-Afar peoples. Similarly, a wide-scale westward expansion of Issa-Somalis in the past seven to eight decades has displaced a number of Afar clans (particularly those who belong to the Weima tribe) from their traditional rangelands in West Hararghe [10; 9].

Another source of conflict between Somali-Afar peoples is the recurring livestock raiding. Somali in Siti zone not only fight for the rich pastoral resources and of smuggling centers in Afar territory, but also for the livestock that they can raid from Afars to sell immediately in domestic markets or export through illegal routes. Nor are Afars immune from the raiding "business." Notable examples of livestock raids and counter-raids occurred in June 2002; Issas raided more than 3,500head of livestock from Afar [4].

Table 2. Conflict Displaced Tracking Matrix of Somali Region of Ethiopia in 2018.

Zone	Woreda	Displacement reason	Round 8		Round 9		%Change increase or decrease
			HHs	Individuals	HHs	Individuals	
Dawa	Hudet	Conflict	14,560	129,490	10,640	81,850	-26.80%
Dawa	Moyale	Conflict	3,620	24,150	14,833	104,748	+309.75%
Dawa	Mubarak	Conflict	5,043	29,089	3,480	24,670	-30.99%
Dawa Total			23,223	182,729	28,953	211,268	+24.80%
Erer	Lagahida	Conflict	895	6,040	1,551	11,756	+73.30%
Erer	Mayamuluqo	Conflict	1,077	8,636	1,250	8,212	+16.06%
Erer	Qubi	Conflict	2,037	14,569	2,069	12,789	+1.57%
Erer	Salahad	Conflict	1,628	11,172	1,508	10,894	-7.37%
Erer Total			5,637	40,417	6,378	43,651	+11.16%
Fafan	Babile	Conflict	12,680	84,520	13,974	96,858	+12.46%
Fafan	Gursum	Conflict	2,560	18,069	757	5,528	-70.22%
Fafan	Tulli-Guled	Conflict	1,638	10,026	2,558	17,334	+34.19%
Fafan Total			16,878	112,615	17,289	119,720	+0.96%
Liban	Deka Suftu	Conflict	6,400	53,471	5,120	29,450	-19.97%
Liban	Filtu	Conflict	4,816	35,832	4,816	26,191	NO change
Liban	Goro Baqaqsa	Conflict	-	-	1,139	7,341	New
Liban	Guradamole	Conflict	-	-	2,342	14,980	New
Liban	Karra Dula	Conflict	1,875	11,182	2,895	16,474	+54.40%
Liban Total			13,091	100,485	16,312	94,436	+24.20%
Nogob	Gerbo	Conflict	48	309	48	281	No change
Nogob	Segeg	Conflict	52	332	50	290	-7.69%

Zone	Woreda	Displacement reason	Round 8		Round 9		%Change increase or decrease
			HHs	Individuals	HHs	Individuals	
Nogob Total			100	641	98	571	+3.40%
Siti	Miesso	Conflict	2,648	17,284	2,742	18,701	+3.55%
Siti	Shinile	Conflict	330	2,296	-	-	Closed
Siti Total			2,978	19,580	2,742	18,701	+1.29%
Grand Total			61,907	456,467	71,772	488,347	+15.58%

Source: IOM: DTM data, 2018

**Table 3.** Vulnerable individuals due to conflict of Somali region in 2018.

S/No	Special vulnerabilities	Individuals
1	Pregnant girls mothers	13,294
2	Breastfeeding Mothers	20,092
3	Persons with Disabilities	2,772
4	Persons with Chronic Diseases	748
5	Elderly Persons without care givers	3,289
6	Unaccompanied Children	650
7	Separated Children	1,292
8	Orphaned Children	2,321
9	Single-female headed Households	4,488
10	Single-male headed Households	2,469
11	Child headed Households	1,080
12	Elderly headed Households	3,537
Grand Total		56,032

Source: IOM, 2018

### 2.3. The Idea of Greater Somalia

The Horn of Africa provides us with an interesting yet intricate landscape, which enables us to examine the role that the arbitrary borders implanted by European colonial powers have played in relation to the political development of the whole region. The phenomena lay the latent legacy of colonialism. In other cases, it was actually the incapacity of African leaders to find a compromise which negatively impacted on attempts to transform the useful proposals explored within Pan-Africanist circles during the 1950s into tangible actions. Within the Horn, Somalia appears to be the country which has suffered the most from, or at least it is the country which has found itself less satisfied with, the border architecture established by the European colonisers.

Somali nationalism's grievances mainly derived from the failed opportunity of creating the much aspired Greater Somalia, which include large territory unifying the Somali speaking populations living in Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. Somalia continued to struggle to secure a redrawing of the borders through both diplomatic and military means in the past history. Nationalism emerged as powerful expression of African revisionism in the region because the former colonial powers. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), founded in Addis Ababa in 1963, formally recognized the borders as they were established by the colonial powers<sup>14</sup>, notwithstanding the fact that many African leaders had long recognized the danger and the menace that these arbitrarily drawn lines implied for the maintenance of continental

stability.

Moreover, in the light of the desire for independent action on the part of African countries, the OAU lacked the legal, military and, in part, the ideological instruments to provide a mediation process that could achieve more than a non-binding recommendation. Independent Somalia's persistent interest in the affairs of adjacent regions represented permanent threat to its neighbours, which, to an extent, shaped their own foreign policies [14].

Somali people are traditionally clan-based society, in which the clan is the primary unit of community life diversifying them. Wherever they are, active nomadic Somali tribes can be found as Darod, Dir, Hawiye and Rahanweyn. Created from the union of Italian Somalia and the British Somaliland Protectorate, the Somali Republic attained independence in July 1960. For its first nine years Somalia enjoyed a succession of democratically elected governments. In October 1969, amid accusations of corruption and electoral malpractice, the military seized power. Under the leadership of General Mohamed Siad Barre, "Scientific Socialism" was adopted as the guiding ideology for the country's development [16].

Under the banner of Scientific Socialism, Barre embarked radical programme to fundamentally restructure Somali society. This programme initially received support from a class of urban intelligentsia with the move from a pastoral society to modern nation state. Centrally planned programme, national development was promoted through an end to tribalism and a commitment to "popular participation", under the guidance of the single Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The masses were mobilised for crash development programmes, such as the 1973/4 literacy campaign were ceremonially burnt; marriages were celebrated at orientation centres and stripped of clan significance; clan elders were renamed 'peace-seekers' (nabad-doons) and made part of the state bureaucracy. This assault on the fabric of Somali society was coupled with state control of the economy. The intention was to turn this 'nation of nomads' into a modern state, in which people were required to look to the state for security and welfare, instead of the clan. Embodying the nation was the President and 'father of the nation', Siad Barre.

In September of 1974 the regime of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia was overthrown. In 1977, taking advantage of the weakened Ethiopian state and internal conflict of the country, Siad Barre launched a war to reclaim the Somali regional state (Ogaden) for Somalia and with his dream to form "Greater Somalia". The war, which met with almost universal support among the Somali people, was a high point of Somali

14 OAU's Charter, Article III (paragraph three): "Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence". 1964 OAU Cairo Resolution will further confirm OAU's pledge to respect borders.

nationalism and Barre's popularity.

The issue of the so-called Greater Somalia Outlook in Ethiopian Somali was started with the establishment of the Somali National Regional State (SNRS) in 1992 the time when individuals who were officials of the neighbouring Somalia took almost all of the key positions of the region. As part of its unification struggle, Somalia followed a policy of providing its citizenship to all ethnic Somalis. Hence, the government of Somalia considered many Somalis who went from Ethiopia to Somalia as its own citizens. Some even became civil and military officials in the Somalia with Greater Somalia. The idea of greater Somali is a dream of all Somalis starting from that time, but no one can know if it will be true or not in the future.

#### 2.4. Actors of the conflict in the Somali region

To identify actors of the conflict in the region pre and post 1991, the researcher made a group discussion with clan elders and district officers at Gode and Dendema (Babile Somali) on August and September 2018 respectively. The discussions response was written in the box below.

The actors of the conflict in the Somali region were various and highly complicated to identify them at different levels. They found from government structures up to the local community levels, and include ONLF, WSLF and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) forces and cadres. Regional political leaders are also participated in the conflict between the two regions as a neutral actor. The Greater Somalia dreamers who were passionate from regional higher officers who took the regional positions post-1992 are the actors of the conflict in the region. Beside to this, other armed clans, local administrative networks, regional police, federal military, clan elders, demobilized soldiers are the main actors of conflict in Somali regional state.

#### 2.5. Emerging Issues That May Affect Conflict Dynamics in the SOMALI Region in the Future

##### 2.5.1. Crude Oil and minerals in Somali Region

The Calub and Hilala Crude Oil extraction found in Somali regional State and currently commercially-viable amounts has been extracted on June 2018 according to Federal and regional officials. Sadly, the general experience across Africa when minerals or oil have been found has not been a positive one for the development of local people. The use of the term "resource curse" is commonly used to describe this negative effect and neighboring country Sudan provides an excellent example of some of the dangers associated with oil and conflict. Should significant minerals or oil be found, the governance, transparency, and accountability regarding the use of minerals or oil in the region will be critical in averting major problems, if this resources wisely managed based on research and community needs it can lead to civil war and political crisis in the country. Simple example has been happen in Somali regional sate in 2007 when more than 80 Chinese and Ethiopian oil workers surveying in the southern areas of the Somali region has been killed by ONLF. Similarly, the Ethiopian PM Dr. Abiyi Ahmed made speech about this resource which has been politicized and more citizens killed in the region. All this illustrative of the sensitivity associated

with crude oil or minerals resources in Somali region.

##### 2.5.2. Land Resources

The nature of the land use and ownership is changing from time to time in Somali region. The issues associated with changing nature of land use and ownership is considerable and not easily managed in the future. Pastoral areas or pastoralism nature of Somali Society is a critical aspect of the conflict dynamics associated with all of the different relationships which make difficult to envisage these problems subsiding until current policies regarding land tenure and its utilization are revisited. In fact, it is likely that issues will continue to become more acute with expanding populations and greater pressures on existing lands as well as the consequences of overlaying administrative boundaries dispute need critical solution and policy revise. Currently, the most fertile lands in the region around Webi-shabelle, Dawa, Erer, Dakata and Hurso are being increasingly absorbed for uses of large scale commercial farming for cotton, bio-fuels, and other crops.

##### 2.5.3. Distribution of Woredas

Somali regional state is the second largest region in the country. But, originally the region has only 52 districts and became 93 in 2016. The regional government increasing the number of the district from time to time this approach also reinforces the concept of ownership of specific geographic areas by clans or ethnic groups which leads to inter-clans conflict in the region. Similarly, the regional parliament approved 99 new districts in July 2018 and disapproved again after regional government change (Abdi Mohamed Omar was removed and Mustafe Mahamoud became regional president). The Ethiopian government is also undertaking a process of reducing the overall number of woredas in the Somali Regional State in order to improve efficiencies of administration which is likely to create further tensions in the region if it is not properly managed and woreda distribution not based on specific criteria.

##### 2.5.4. Change in Regional Politics

Somali regional state politics is volatile and very complex to manage. From October 2007, Ethiopian Military force was replaced by local government-affiliated militias in the frontline against ONLF. Authorities were later on replaced by Liyu<sup>15</sup> Police<sup>16</sup>, the special police force was established by Abdi Mohamed Omar (known as Abdi Iley), in his capacity as chief of the Regional Bureau of Justice and Security. Information from sources, however, diverges on when Liyu Police was established. Professor Tobias Hagmann (2014, p. 49) notes that in the early establishment of this special force [12] was reported that Liyu Police was created in 2007 and that the force was already prominent in 2008. Previously the number of Liyu Police estimated between 10,000 and 15,000 members. However, the force today has approximately 42,000 members which indicate that Liyu Police has grown

<sup>15</sup> Liyu means "Special" in Amharic

<sup>16</sup> Meeting in Addis Ababa, April 2016 explained that all regional states in Ethiopia have their own special police, except Harar.



considerably in recent years, which is consisted with the force having expanded its responsibilities in the region as well as peace keeping responsibility outside the country like Somalia [12].

Following new political change in the country and coming of Dr. Abiyi Ahmed to the position speedy political change in the country's states has been observed and Somali regional state president of the last ten years Mr. Abdi Mohamed Omar has been removed from his position with coming of new president Mr. Mustafe Mahamoud (Agjar). Group discussion responses held in Kebridahar and Jigjiga indicate that the issue of Liyu police should be properly managed by regional and federal government. Unless the issue of regional special force "Liyu Police" properly managed with special consideration it can increase conflict tensions in the region and the country in the future.

### 3. Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 3.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be understood that current Ethiopian political debates indicate that the dominant political party and economic practice will determine the viability of ethnic federalism. The conflict dynamics in Somali region is very complicated issue and changing from time to time. The local political leadership and administrative authorities do not able to resolve conflict in their jurisdiction this can change conflict dynamics. From April 2016 the conflict dynamics of Somali region was triggered by conflict between Somali-Oromia. The current new dilemma conflict between Somali-Oromo ethnic groups is challenging the Ethiopian Federal Government and it requires policy for conflict management in inter-ethnic disputes not only for two ethnic groups but for the whole country. Previously, the Somali-Oromia Conflict is a resource-based conflict which was part of the livelihoods-conflict cycle; but, in 2016/17 the situation has become more complicated due to governance factors.

In general contexts, the Somali regional state conflict dynamics will be affected by Oil and minerals extraction potential of the region, Land use and ownership, Woreda or administrative distributions among the Somali-clans as well as regional political power division and regional volatile political issues in the future.

#### 3.2. Recommendations

- i. The Federal and regional governments should be involved together in peace-keeping and security of the Somali region; they need to make a long-term commitment of people and resources.
- ii. The Federal government should develop good governance, fairness, transparency, and accountability regarding the use of minerals or oil in the Somali region state.
- iii. Both federal and regional governments should develop clear policy about pastoral areas or pastoralism nature of Somali Society.
- iv. The Somali regional state government should equally and fairly distribute administrative and political power in the region.
- v. There is a need to incorporate longer-term action research component that would address some of the questions and issues that can be raised in the conflict dynamics of Somali regional state.
- vi. Local community elders should support a two-state solution to the Somali-Oromia conflict. They should have to encourage reconciliation between two neighbours communities and promote comprehensive peace in the future.

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