



# SEARCHING FOR PEACE

Views and Comments from Somalia on the Foundations of  
a New Government

Findings from Focus Groups with  
Men and Women in Somalia

Conducted February-June 2011

By Andrea L. Levy

September 2011

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs



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## NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. With staff members and volunteer political practitioners from more than 100 nations, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. Partners receive broad exposure to best practices in international democratic development that can be adapted to the needs of their own countries. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies. The Institute's work upholds the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also promotes the development of institutionalized channels of communications among citizens, political institutions and elected officials, and strengthens their ability to improve the quality of life for all citizens. For more information about NDI, visit [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).

## PREFACE

This report explores public opinion in Somalia. Based on 54 focus group discussions with average Somali citizens<sup>1</sup> and 28 one-on-one interviews with traditional and religious leaders<sup>2</sup> conducted from February to June 2011, the goal of the research was to explore Somalis' perceptions of important issues facing the country today, particularly with respect to the formation of a new government and constitution. Specifically, the study explored attitudes toward the following subject areas:

- Country direction and sources of conflict;
- The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and other key players;
- Puntland and Somaliland policies;
- Federalism, the proper role of clan in government, political parties, presidential vs. parliamentary form of government;
- A new constitution and voting protocol;
- Roles for the diaspora and the international community;
- Problems afflicting Somali youth; and
- Achieving peace in Somalia.

The research also touched on radio and mobile phone usage.

Participants feel at the mercy of a host of circumstances and events beyond their control, including the civil war, the environment (drought and famine), unemployment, poverty, and lack of development in all sectors. They believe that lack of governance, clanism, foreign intervention and profiteering fuel the ongoing desperate situation in the country. They worry about the dissolution of the country into separate fiefdoms and are eager to preserve the country's unity. They are frustrated by their continuous disenfranchisement and want the country's leadership to be selected on merit, not clan. Therefore, they embrace the concept of political parties based on common goals for the country's future. They show eagerness about the idea of a new constitution for the country as a means of bringing peace and order, reducing the impact of clanism, and codifying citizens' rights. Most want a peaceful resolution to the conflict, with international assistance, but they want it to be principally a Somali-led effort.

**Focus Groups Results and Usage.** Focus groups are semi-structured group discussions directed by a moderator and following a pre-set guideline. Unless otherwise noted, the conclusions presented here represent views commonly and repeatedly cited during the groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Four of the groups were held with the diaspora in Kenya in Nairobi and the Dadaab and Ifo refugee camps.

<sup>2</sup> In total, the study involved 651 participants.

The interaction between participants in a focus group provides insight into how citizens think and feel and is often a more powerful means of understanding why those attitudes exist than interviewing people individually. Information gathered in this way reflects citizen values and needs and is critical in helping decision-makers test their assumptions and incorporate the will of the people into policy-making.

**A Snapshot of Public Opinion.** Any public opinion research, including focus groups, is only a snapshot of opinion at the moment the research is undertaken. Public opinion is dynamic and evolves as people experience and react to major events, particularly in conflict-affected environments such as Somalia. Therefore, the conclusions of this report represent opinions only when the research was undertaken.

**A Qualitative Research Tool.** Focus groups are a qualitative, not a quantitative, research instrument. Although focus groups are a superior research method for understanding the meanings behind commonly held attitudes, the total number of participants in focus group research is always relatively small and thus is not statistically representative of the larger population. This report reflects the opinions of the citizens of Somalia who participated in this study. General terms, such as ‘people’ and ‘citizens’ may be used on occasion in this report as a convenience to represent the attitudes of those participants; however, the Focus Group Participant Demographics chart as well as the Methodology Notes appearing at the end of the report should be consulted by all readers to understand the sub-set of individuals interviewed for this study.

**Participant Perceptions vs. Political Realities.** The *perceptions* of participants in these focus groups do not necessarily reflect *reality*. Ordinary citizens often judge progress based on the change in their own lives. Improvements in areas outside their immediate interests (although important in the greater context) are not always viewed as progress by the average person. Participants in this study sometimes get their facts wrong and often form their opinions based on inaccurate or semi-accurate readings of the world around them. Nevertheless, even if their perceptions do not represent reality, there is power in these perceptions. Citizens make decisions based on what they believe. Without knowledge of these perceptions, policy-makers and other stakeholders will not be able to address them. Thus, the goal of this research is to report the perceptions and opinions of participants, regardless of their accuracy, to Somali political and civil society leaders so they may better understand and respond to the concerns of the general populace.

NDI's ongoing program in Somalia is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through multi-year grants. The inclusion of regular public opinion research in NDI's wider Somalia initiative helps policymakers better understand the views of citizens as they make important decisions that will shape the future of the region. This is the second in a series of studies NDI plans to conduct in Somalia on a regular basis through 2013. NDI is pleased to share the views of Somali citizens with government officials and other stakeholders as they work to create a stable and conflict-free country.



This map is illustrative only and its inclusion does not imply endorsement of specific geographical boundaries. The dots (●) represent 21 of the 23 focus group and one-on-one interview locations. The Ifo refugee camp is located in Dadaab and Nairobi is not on this map.

Source: United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

## THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Somali citizens have lost faith in their transitional institutions and are looking for new opportunities to provide input on how to move their country forward. The quotations below reflect their thoughts about the government, their desire for more citizen participation, and their recommendations for attaining a peaceful and prosperous future.

*“The biggest issue which caused the current conflict is lack of governance.”*

*“There are an illogical number of members of parliament who use a lot of funds.”*

*“We need to change the current government into a participatory government in which all members of the community have a say.”*

*“There must be laws to control the parliament because it is responsible for the troubles.”*

*“I think if we get a honest government then peace can be attained.”*

*“I don’t believe a word the current government says because I don’t see the services it provides.”*

*“I absolutely don’t trust this government. How can a government have more than 500 members of parliament?”*

*“I do not think that there was a government after Mohammed Siad Barre’s government; I would like not to mention [the current government] so let us talk how to establish a new government.”*

*“They need to stop using the media as a forum for criticizing one another on their differences because it discourages the citizens.”*

*“I would suggest this government be disbanded and replaced with an action-minded one, because they only benefit from their positions and suck the people’s blood.”*

*“I can’t see anything they can do because all their programs are dictated from abroad so there is no other solution other than for them to leave their positions.”*

*“The government can be improved if it were elected by the people.”*

*“I would suggest that the TFG and the insurgents come together and talk about their differences.”*

*“All foreign troops should be removed from the country, and the responsibility for security should be transferred to the Somali army; they are capable.”*

*“The foreign troops should go, and the Somali warring sides should have a dialogue.”*

*“[The solution is] to remove all foreigners who are supporting the TFG so that the Somali people can unite and restore security by themselves.”*

*“[The government] needs to put the national interest above personal interests.”*

*“People with knowledge must take positions of authority. That can restore peace.”*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores public opinion in Puntland and South Central Somalia and among Somali citizens in the diaspora in Kenya. It is NDI's second focus group study in Somalia – the first was undertaken in June 2010<sup>3</sup>. Based on 54 focus group discussions and 28 one-on-one interviews<sup>4</sup> with 651 Somali participants, this report examines attitudes and concerns of Somali citizens about the formation of a future government and constitution. Participants were also asked about their views about other important topics such as government performance and achievement of peace. Key findings are summarized below. The full results, along with selected quotations from participants, can be found in the Principal Findings section of this report.

### I. Country Direction and Conflict

- **Participants evince a sense of utter fatigue and desperation about life in Somalia**, with the persistence of the civil war and its attendant death and destruction, the vagaries of the environment (drought and famine) which wreak havoc on their lives and livelihoods, as well as unemployment, poverty, and lack of development in all sectors. And they decry the absence of an effective government that can address these myriad problems.
- **The issue of foreign intervention in the country arouses profound emotions.** Participants feel a strong sense of victimization. They believe that foreigners – from the Western nations to Somalia's immediate neighbors to the foreign fighters working for *Al Shabab* – are involved with Somalia only to satisfy their selfish economic and political interests. Participants are deeply disappointed by the lack of progress made during past reconciliation conferences sponsored by the international community.
- **Their concerns about the harmful effect of foreign intervention in Somalia lead them to reject the notion of the government hiring private security firms.** From a philosophical standpoint, they believe these firms trample on Somalia's sovereignty; from a practical angle, they are convinced these companies will loot the country's natural resources.
- **This sense of injustice and disappointment causes some to reject any future role whatsoever for the international community in Somalia.** But most are not willing to sever ties completely – they believe the international community must assist with reconciliation efforts by providing financial and moral support. And many want continued humanitarian and financial aid.
- **Participants do not believe Somalis themselves are blameless, however.** They denounce clanism for causing the country's original descent into lawlessness and indict the business community for their profiteering from the continuing conflict.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrea Levy, *Looking Toward The Future: Citizen Attitudes about Peace, Governance and the Future in Somalia*, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, December 2010.

<sup>4</sup> The one-on-one interviews were held with traditional and religious leaders.

### II. Key Players

- **Most feel a complete sense of futility about government efforts to stop the chaos and believe the TFG is not working in the citizens' best interests.** Therefore, they are opposed to an extension of the TFP's mandate beyond August 2011.
- **They do not see *Al Shabab* as a standard bearer of Islam** – quite the contrary. They believe that *Al Shabab* has made a mockery of the religion.<sup>5</sup>
- **On balance, participants tend to hold more negative than positive views toward the international community.** Views are most unfavorable and cynical toward the United States and Ethiopia.

### III. Autonomy and Federalism

- **Participants strongly desire a unified Somalia and are very fearful about the possibility of the permanent disintegration of the country.** They respect the peace and stability that Somaliland has attained but don't want to see it secede. Most (particularly Puntland residents) respect the current level of Puntland's autonomy but are uncomfortable with Puntland's break with the TFG in January 2011.
- **Support for a federal system for Somalia has increased since the June 2010 study,** possibly because of intensified media coverage of constitutionalism and therefore increased understanding. Supporters see it as a means to relieve pressure on relations between the regions and the central government and reduce any impetus for secession.

### IV. Clan and the Political System

- **Consistent with the June 2010 study, participants continue to reject the 4.5 power-sharing formula<sup>6</sup> as discriminatory and non-merit-based.**
- **In general, they don't want the clan system to play any role in governance.** Therefore, they are very supportive of the eventual formation of political parties in the country as a replacement for clanism. They see political parties as the gateway to a citizen-selected, competence-based government. They want these parties to be national, rather than regional, and are opposed to the idea of basing them on clan.

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<sup>5</sup> Attitudes in *Al Shabab*-controlled regions were harder to gauge, as most participants were hesitant to speak about the group, but the moderators' assessment of these participants is that they did not have positive sentiments about *Al Shabab*. In addition, some participants in these areas did have the courage to voice negative attitudes about the group – a testament to the depth of their feeling.

<sup>6</sup> The TFG institutions are based on the so-called '4.5 formula,' designed to balance and share representation and power in Somalia. The formula divides Somali clans into four major ones (Dir, Darod, Hawiye and Rahanweyn) and condenses the five minority constituencies into the remaining '0.5.'

- **When asked to choose between a presidential or parliamentary system for Somalia, many make their choice on the basis of incomplete or erroneous information.** Many have a predilection for a presidential versus a parliamentary system because of their antipathy toward the current parliament (even though it was not popularly elected) and their concerns about transparency in voting for and accountability of the president.
- **Those who choose a parliamentary system don't truly understand how the voting would take place or how the system would work.** Therefore, Somalis will need careful explanation of the relative benefits and demerits of both systems to be able to make a realistic appraisal.

## V. Constitution

- **About half of the groups have heard at least something about the draft constitution.** That figure is encouraging, but clearly, more outreach and education are required. (All traditional and religious leaders demonstrated knowledge of the draft, although many do not have specific details about the draft.)
- **Positive attitudes toward a constitution for Somalia have increased since the June 2010 study.** Participants express hope that a new constitution will be able to bring peace and order, reduce the impact of clanism, eliminate the 4.5 power-sharing system and codify citizen's rights so that any violations will have legal consequences.
- **This increase in acceptance of a new constitution is likely based on some level of comprehension gleaned from media coverage.** The June 2010 study revealed little understanding of constitutionalism at that time.
- **Participants are strongly enthusiastic about the public consultation process and the ability to vote on the draft constitution.**
- **They accept the notion of a constituent assembly choosing whether to ratify the draft in lieu of individual voting** as they understand the limitations on countrywide voting imposed by the lack of security. Importantly, however, they are completely opposed to having the TFP comprise the assembly as they say the parliamentarians do not represent their interests. Acceptance rises somewhat if others, such as civil society members, are included.
- **Citizens in South Central are against the notion of dual-track voting on the constitution.**<sup>7</sup> They either want all citizens to be represented by a constituent assembly or believe the vote should be delayed until everyone in Somalia can safely participate. Puntland residents are more comfortable with the notion of dual-track voting.

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<sup>7</sup> Dual-track voting means that secure areas would vote and insecure areas would be represented through a constituent assembly.

VI. Diaspora

- **Participants welcome the return of members of the diaspora but many have qualms about their abilities to be good leaders as they worry they are not in touch with current realities in the country.**

VII. Conflict Resolution

- **Most want a peaceful solution to the conflict through reconciliation between the opposing forces** – only a minority advocate the use of force. Although, as noted earlier, many see a role for the international community in terms of providing financial and moral support, they are nonetheless adamant that reconciliation must principally be a Somali-led effort.

## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

### I. Country Direction and Conflict

#### 1. Practically all participants believe Somalia is moving in the wrong direction. Many use the term “chaos” to describe the current situation.

As well as the continuing civil war and obvious lack of security that many in the country face, causing the death and displacement of innocent civilians, participants also cite dire environmental and economic concerns:

- Drought and famine, inflicting harm on livestock as well as people;
- Unemployment (particularly among the youth) and low wages; and
- Collapsed economy, poverty.

Additionally, they point to a lack of governance and absence of development: education and health services, access to clean water.

Not surprisingly, many express a sense of utter fatigue and desperation that the civil war has persisted for 20 years.

*“Somalia has seen 20 years of chaos with no hopes of ending. Things are going in the wrong direction. May Allah save us from this. We are tired. Enough is enough.”* (Family provider, Baledweyn)

*“The situation in Somalia is a continuous 20 years of difficulties and hardships ... so the situation is going in the wrong direction ... let Allah rid us of these problems – more than these we cannot tolerate. We are tired. It is enough.”* (Fisherman, Adale)

*“I also believe that Somalia has been going in the wrong direction for the last 20 years. No progress or development have been achieved. There is also the transitional government with an interim president and parliament which doesn’t seem to bear any fruit due to poor management and ignorance.”*  
(Businessman, Galkayo North)

*“The direction is wrong because we have been displaced from our villages. There is no work. Truly, we are in a bad situation.”* (Family provider, Mogadishu)

*“Things in Somalia are going in the wrong direction because of the endless war and lack of reconciliation.”*  
(Female, IDP, Afgoye)

#### 2. Puntland residents feel more secure but worry more about piracy.

When speaking of physical security concerns, those in Puntland are referring to the civil war in South Central; they feel very safe where they reside. A few complain of the presence of landmines in their area left over from prior conflict.

*“We are feeling full peace and security when we stay in Boame.”*  
(Family provider, Boame)

*“We feel very secure because Galdogob is the most peaceful place in Somalia.”* (Businessman, Galdogob)

*“In comparison to the rest of Somalia, the security situation in Puntland is much better.”*  
(Female, Trader, Qardho)

*“In the Bari region, especially in Bosaso, we feel secure with respect to our lives, property and surrounding environment, compared to other Somali cities like Mogadishu.”* (Male, IDP, Bosaso)

As Puntland is the epicenter of the piracy problem, Puntland residents are more likely than their brethren in South Central to note it as a concern. They say that piracy is ruining the reputation and dignity of the Somali people.

*“In Puntland, there is a high rate of piracy, which leads to problems along the Somali coastline.”*  
(Male, University student, Garowe)

### **3. The issue of foreign intervention arouses strong negativity.**

Foreign intervention in Somalia is a highly inflammatory issue among participants. They believe foreigners have no incentive to work toward a peaceful Somalia; further, they claim there is actually a disincentive, as a stable Somalia will undercut their opportunities to assert political leverage and make profits. Thus, they believe foreign intervention is one of the key factors fueling the conflict.

They speak of the great powers who pull the strings of government leaders and have only the interests of their country, rather than Somalia, at heart. They blame their neighbors, Ethiopia and Kenya, for making profits on the war by providing weapons and embezzling aid funds meant for Somalia routed through their countries. They also indict foreigners fighting for *Al Shabab* whom they claim are criminals in their own country who use Somalia as a safe haven.

They say that foreigners are taking advantage of the non-existent regulatory environment. As an example, they claim that NATO countries, under the cover of fighting piracy, are engaging in illegal fishing off of Somali waters. They also note that foreign cartels export expired commodities, illegal to distribute in their own countries, to Somalia.

When participants are asked a general question about whether the international community should continue to play a role in Somalia, only about half the groups say yes<sup>8</sup>. However, many participants are accepting of a role for the international community that is limited to some assistance with reconciliation efforts<sup>9</sup> and provision of aid (both humanitarian and financial).

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<sup>8</sup> This question was not asked of traditional and religious leaders as the discussion guide for the one-on-one interviews was shorter.

<sup>9</sup> See later section regarding reconciliation.

*“Foreign intervention is an important factor that caused the current confrontations among us because both sides are backed by foreigners; Somalis used to fight for a short time and then reconcile. This hostility which has lasted for several decades was caused by foreign intervention.”* (Fisherman, Mogadishu)

*“[The international community] is always organizing conferences, but they don’t want us to unite and have a government.”* (Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

*“The international community is united against us Somalis because they failed to help us in the last 20 years. You can deduce that they aren’t honest toward us.”* (Female, Farmer, Adale)

*“Pirates ... are indirectly supported by foreign countries, who say that ‘we guard the coastline,’ but they intend to loot the natural resources of the sea.”* (Businessman, Galkayo North)

*“The role of the international community is to hold meetings with no results achieved.”*  
(Fisherman, Hobyoy)

*“Foreign intervention is a factor of unrest. When Somalis are supposed to meet, foreign governments arrange the meeting, and Somalis only attend. [They have no input into] the agenda, [they make] no contributions, and own no conclusions.”* (Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)

*“Things which are going on in the South are due to the intervention of foreign powers that are supporting rival powers existing there.”* (Male, University student, Garowe)

#### **4. Participants exhibit a deep mistrust of private security firms.**

In spite of participant concern about the high level of insecurity in South Central and the ongoing affliction of piracy, the majority of participants are solidly against the hiring of private security firms by the government.

Their mistrust of private security firms seems to have its roots in two larger issues: their concern about foreign troops operating in the country<sup>10</sup>, and an extreme wariness about foreign intervention in Somalia, in general (as noted above).

Their apprehensions are threefold:

- These firms are an infringement on Somali sovereignty.
- The money that these firms are paid should instead be used to raise the paltry salaries of Somali troops, train them better and hire new troops. By hiring new troops, participants say the dual problems of unemployment and piracy can be mitigated (since economic desperation fuels a resort to piracy).
- Private companies have their own agenda – they don’t have the welfare of the Somali people as their highest concern – and will profit from the disorder by looting the country’s natural resources.

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<sup>10</sup> Many seem to make little distinction between private security firms and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops.

*“It’s a bad thing to hire private firms. They have their own interests, and a lot of money is being wasted for their services.”* (Male, Trader, Nairobi)

*“It’s a bad thing because they impose their system on our government, and it is a kind of colonization. We must organize our own forces.”* (Religious leader, Mogadishu)

*“I see it as bad. Instead, we must create job opportunities for our sons who are involved in piracy. Those private security firms do not maintain security but create internal fighting.”*  
(Small-scale businesswoman, Bandarbeyla)

*“I see it as a bad thing because we have young boys who are pirates, and they can be recruited to serve the country rather than hiring private companies.”* (Family provider, Bandarbeyla)

A minority is accepting of private security firms if their mandate is limited to training only.

*“If these companies are going to give trainings to our soldiers and later on leave the country, I think it is good.”* (Family provider, Abudwak)

*“It is not something that I can accept – they can only train our army.”* (Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

### **5. Belief is widespread that the business community in Somalia profits from the instability and therefore has an incentive to prolong it.**

Most participants believe that the Somali business community, along with the international community, is benefiting from the country’s instability and complete absence of regulatory framework. They say that businesspeople earn high profits because they pay no government taxes or import duties<sup>11</sup>. Notably, even some businessmen and traders agree with these assertions.

Participants’ outrage particularly centers on two practices which affect all Somalis most directly, one representing outright fraud, and the other, a market response to the scarcity of goods.

- First, they note that business people import expired medicine and food (from those foreign cartels they had also implicated) into the country, potentially causing disease and death.
- Second, they claim that the business community charges inflated prices for goods.

*“The business community profits from the current conflicts in Somalia because they supply weapons ... also, they import expired goods which ... can cause diseases or death. I can say the business community is the only group interested in the continuation of the conflict because if peace is acquired, their businesses will be investigated.”*

(Traditional leader, Hobyo)

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<sup>11</sup> This assertion leaves aside, of course, the payoffs that many businesspeople must make to insurgent groups to be able to conduct their operations.

*“Business people benefit ... from importing expired food and medicine ...and they earn high profits with no government control.”*

(Businessman, Garowe)

*“Businessmen benefit from the situation; if the country gets a government, they will face a lot of problems, including taxes, so they need the conflict to continue.”* (Family provider, Abudwak)

## **6. There is pervasive nostalgia for the stability and development policies of the Siad Barre regime.**

Participants were asked at which point in Somali history (during the last 40 years) they felt the situation was best for the country<sup>12</sup>. They almost unanimously choose the time of the Siad Barre regime. Obviously, the younger participants did not have much or any experience with the regime but were responding based on information gleaned from family and other sources.

They note that the country was stable, with a strong economy, and offered free education and good health care. They also appreciate that the government was well-respected within the region as well as internationally.

It is also useful to note what participants did not cite as a reason for their choice – they did not mention the more secular society in which Somalis lived at the time. It is interesting to speculate whether some participants may have had this point-of-view but did not feel comfortable sharing it in a group setting<sup>13</sup>.

*“The 70’s and 80’s was the best time, when the ports were functioning, peace was prevalent, education was at its highest level, and health services were available.”*

(Male, IDP, Mogadishu)

*“From 1970-1980, those years were the best times. Somalia was the most powerful country in the African continent. We used to have free education, health services and reliable security.”*

(Female, Trader, Qardho)

*“I think the best time was from 1970–1980s because we had a government which was very strong and powerful. [Somalia] was the most powerful country in Africa. Also, the economy was strong, health and education services were free, and there were great campaigns to teach the pastoral people how to write the Somali language.”* (Family provider, Abudwak)

Some participants laud the six-month period in 2006 when the Islamic Courts Union came to power because there was security and peace.

*“When the Islamic Courts Union came to power [was the best time for Somalia] because there was security and peace in Mogadishu.”* (Small-scale businesswoman, Bandarbeyla)

<sup>12</sup> The question offered four time periods: “during the time of the government in the 1970’s and 1980’s; at the time of the warlords, between 1991-2004; between 2006-9, after Ethiopia sent troops to Somalia and when the current TFG was set up; from 2009 until now.”

<sup>13</sup> See later discussion on the changing role of Islam in the country.

*“The four-to-six month period of the Islamic Courts Union was also a time of peace and prosperity.”*  
(Female, Trader, Jilib)

## II. Key Players

### 1. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) generally receives low marks for its performance.

Consistent with NDP's previous study in 2010, most participants continue to give the TFG a grade of fair or poor<sup>14</sup> in its efforts to govern Somalia.

They are disappointed that the TFG has not made more progress in stabilizing the country and blame the government for bringing in foreign troops whom they accuse of causing death to innocent civilians, destruction and displacement of the population.

Many note that the parliament is hobbled by an excessive number of parliamentarians and want to see that number reduced.

*“I call a government a system that cares for and serves its people. We don't have that system here.”*  
(Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

*“I think the TFG does not deserve a good mark. A government which displaces and causes troubles for its people as well as gets orders from abroad and doesn't make any decisions can't be a good government.”*  
(Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*“The government has failed to set up a good administration in the country, and it has accepted indiscriminate shelling of the innocent people of Mogadishu as they hired foreign troops for this purpose.”*  
(Family provider, Bosaso)

*“I will give the government a poor rating because I have only heard about them through the media and never felt their existence practically.”* (Female, Farmer, Hudur)

A minority of participants damn the government with faint praise, opining that “any government is better than no government” or asserting that it at least has international recognition.

*“I give them a fair rating for they are better than no government. No government means the beginning of all evils.”* (Fisherman, Bandarbeyla)

*“I would give the TFG a fair rating because it is internationally recognized although it is weak internally.”*  
(Female, Farmer, Diinsoor)

*“I would rate them as good because they have international recognition.”* (Family provider, Baledweyn)

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<sup>14</sup> Participants were asked to rate the TFG using a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.

*“For me, the TFG is good because it’s representing us with the Somali flag.”* (Female, Trader, Hobyo)

The small minority of participants who give the TFG higher ratings note the progress that has been made in Mogadishu with respect to the TFG’s December 2010 pledge to make advancements in security in its first 100 days in office.

*“They started to implement a security program in which they stated that they will restore peace and security in the capital within 100 days, and they have achieved something in that direction.”*  
(Family provider, Mogadishu)

## **2. Participants express strong opposition to the extension of the TFP’s mandate.**

The vast majority of participants, with the exception of four groups with women, had heard of the Transitional Federal Parliament’s decision in February 2011 to extend its mandate by three years<sup>15</sup>.

Participants express practically unanimous disapproval. They note that the TFP has already had years to make some kind of progress but has failed, so that increasing their time in office will not make a difference – further, keeping the same ineffectual people in power will probably make things worse.

They also complain that the decision to extend the mandate was decided in a vacuum, without consultation with anyone else. They believe it is motivated by greed (by retaining their positions, members can continue to draw a salary), rather than concern for moving Somalia forward.

Cynicism abounds – many believe this extension will not be an isolated event but will be repeated at the end of any subsequent mandate period.

*“[The extension] is not good. What they couldn’t do all these years, they can’t do in the next three years.”*  
(Female, Refugee-Returnee, Nairobi)

*“We have a bad attitude toward the extension. TFG parliamentarians are only looking for a salary, and they don’t think about the interests of the people.”*  
(Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

*“They have no right to extend their mandate. It’s a bad decision.”* (Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)  
*“This government needs to be changed since they are not doing anything for us; we need new leaders.”*  
(Traditional leader, Hobyo)

A very small minority support an extension because they are worried about the political vacuum that will emerge if the TFP leaves power in August. And a few say they can accept an extension if the TFP achieves some movement toward peace before their mandate expires.

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<sup>15</sup> The mandate was due to expire on August 20, 2011.

*“It’s a good thing because there is nobody to take over [after they leave].”*  
(Male, Trader, Nairobi)

*“They can extend the mandate if they achieve something in restoring peace.”*  
(Family provider, Mogadishu)

### **3. Most participants view *Al Shabab* as a malevolent force that perverts Islam.**

In the areas not controlled by *Al Shabab*, attitudes toward the group are almost unanimously negative – including among religious and traditional leaders. Participants accuse *Al Shabab* of using the cover of religion to commit numerous atrocities: killings, beatings, amputations, robbery. Importantly, most say that the actions of *Al Shabab* are not in line with Islam.

In six of the nine *Al Shabab*-controlled areas in which NDI conducted research, participants mostly declined to discuss the group. A few offered positive comments about the stability that *Al Shabab* has engendered by quashing clan fighting and crime<sup>16</sup>.

- However, in Afgoye, Jilib, and Adale, it is notable that a number of participants spoke out against the violent acts perpetrated by *Al Shabab* – a testament to the strong negative feelings they have about the group, in view of the bravery it took to verbalize these sentiments.
- And a group of women in Baidoa and one in Hudur agreed that *Al Shabab*’s actions are not in line with Islam.

*“They are men who quote verses of the Koran, but their words contradict what they are doing, which is unacceptable even to a mad man.”* (Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“I have a bad feeling about them because they have killed so many innocent people, alleging they have ties with the government.”* (Female, IDP, Afgoye)

*“I have bad feelings about Al Shabab. Some locals say they achieved some progress in security as thieves were [chased out of] their areas, but I do not agree with them because they slaughtered many people minutes after they came back from mosques.”*  
(Religious leader, Mogadishu)

*“I believe these extremists work for foreign hands, and they are not what they claim to be. They are giving Islam a bad image and forcing people to run away from Islam. Islam is a religion of tolerance and mercy. Even worse, they are preventing the people from embracing Islam because of the bad image they are spreading. They are killing their fellows Muslims for martyrdom. Allah told us in his holy Koran that anyone who kills a Muslim illegally will languish in the hellfire for good.”* (Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Baledweyn)

*“I have a bad feeling about Al Shabab because they misuse the Islamic religion, and they also commit diverse offenses which are against Islamic teachings and international law.”* (Traditional leader, Hobyó)

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<sup>16</sup> The moderators who led the discussions believe that those who expressed positive sentiments did so out of fear of making critical comments.

*“The source of conflict [in Somalia] has been religious extremism. [Al Shabab] is similar to Hitler.”*  
(Male, IDP, Mogadishu)

*“The people profiting most from the problems in Hiran are the Al Qaeda criminals who are looking for a safe haven. If peace reigns in Somalia, they will have nowhere to go so they want to keep the country as chaotic as it currently is.”* (Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Baledweyn)

*“I have a negative feeling toward Al Shabab because they claim to be real Muslims but what you observe is real chaos.”*  
(Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)

#### **4. Participants express more positive sentiment toward *Ahlu Sunnah* than *Al Shabab*.**

Views of *Ahlu Sunnah* are more mixed. Those with positive views respect them for the traditional role they played in Islamic studies and for their cooperation with the TFG. Some participants believe the actions of *Ahlu Sunnah*, unlike those of *Al Shabab*, are in keeping with Islamic law.

*“We have a positive feeling about them because they apply their religion [properly] and do not lie about it.”*  
(Female, IDP, Mogadishu)

*“I have a positive feeling toward Ahlu Sunnah because they endorsed the TFG.”*  
(Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)

Those with negative perceptions believe the group has no fixed ideology and is interested only in gaining power rather than moving the country forward. Some also condemn *Ahlu Sunnah* for being a “puppet”<sup>17</sup> of Ethiopia.

But most of those with negative views still do not equate *Ahlu Sunnah*’s actions with those of *Al Shabab*.

*“I have bad feelings about them because we know the former Ahlu Sunnah were good sheikhs, but today’s so called Ahlu Sunnah are militias, and they only carry the name ... they wage war with the people and have their own interests.”* (Female, IDP, Afgoye)

#### **5. With respect to changes in the practice of Islam in Somalia, many condemn self-serving fundamentalism, but some focus instead on the expansion of religious knowledge.**

In order to understand participants’ perceptions of the trend toward Islamic fundamentalism in the country, participants were asked how the practice of Islam had changed in Somalia over the recent years.

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<sup>17</sup> Term used by female university student in Bosaso.

Many describe what they see as a weakening of the practice, where Islam has been relegated to a tool to serve individual and group interests. They say that new sects who use Islam as a mask to consolidate their power and extort money using terror tactics (read *Al Shabab*, principally) have tarnished the religion.

Those in *Al Shabab*-controlled regions note that the “people” have changed – a reference that could perhaps be construed as an oblique criticism of *Al Shabab*.

*“Shari’a is being used as a tool for terrorizing the people.”*  
(Family provider, Baledweyn)

*“They [Al Shabab] have made a joke out of the noble religion.”*  
(Businessman, Galkayo North)

*“I see it as the worst time for implementation of Islam because people are going to mosques because they fear Al Shabab. I met with many people who are not fearing Allah.”* (Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“The biggest problem today is the politicizing of the Islamic religion – killing someone for working with the government or saying that he brings things to the troops of Burundi and Uganda or takes medicine from them. The reason for the Somalia conflict today is that the religion is used in a wrong way.”*  
(Fisherman, Adale)

For some participants, their comments clearly suggest admiration for the powerful role currently played by Islam. They focus on the expansion of religious knowledge that has occurred over the past 10 years, with the increase in the number of religious leaders, venues for religious study, and mosques. They say that the Somali people understand Islam much better than at the time of the Siad Barre regime.

*“There has been a change in practicing Islam; people have learned more about Islam in mosques and through the [media] and have deeply understood Islam after the collapse of the central government in 1991.”*  
(Female, Farmer, Adale)

Those participants who criticize the weakening of the practice of Islam take great care not to criticize any aspects of Islam itself, merely to condemn the way it has been applied. They express nothing but positive feelings for the “true” expression of the religion according to Koranic principles.

*“The Islamic religion does not change, but it’s badly practiced.”*  
(Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

Thus what is not clear from their responses, as noted in an earlier section, is to what extent these participants would be comfortable with the all-consuming role that Islam has come to play in Somali society if it were practiced “properly.”

Religious and traditional leaders also fall on both sides of the issue. While some condemn what they see as a trend toward the self-interested, power-obsessed promulgation of Islam in the country, others mainly concentrate on and laud the expansion of religious knowledge that has occurred.

*“There have been changes since 1991. Those changes increased implementation of Islamic Shari’a, but the [practice of Islam] declined when religious groups went to war and deformed it.”*  
(Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*“Surely, ruling people according to Islamic Shari’a is good, and we welcome it, but there are those who use the religion in the wrong way.”*  
(Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*“When the Somali government collapsed, [Islam] was the only thing to return as a reference. People practiced and learned the religion splendidly.”* (Traditional leader, Abudwak)

## **6. Participants hold religious leaders in high esteem, but many express mixed feelings about traditional leaders.**

Participants express great respect and admiration for the country’s religious leaders. They believe these leaders play a pivotal role by spreading Islam, giving advice and solving problems, and generally trying to maintain peace and stability.

Other than in Puntland, where participants have overwhelmingly favorable views of traditional leaders, most participants in other areas have both positive and negative things to say.

- On the positive side, participants laud traditional leaders for their ability to settle disputes and conflicts. Puntlanders appreciate the role of these leaders in creating their peaceful refuge within Somalia.
- On the negative side, South Central participants blame them for causing Somalia’s downward spiral through their stoking and manipulation of clan rivalries.

*“Whenever you hear the name ‘Muslim leader,’ then you become soft- hearted because they are very good people who know the religion.”* (Family provider, Abudwak)

*“I have respect and a positive feeling toward clan elders because they had the solution for our daily problems and constant conflicts; they had the wisdom that people always needed.”*  
(Fisherman, Bandarbeyla)

*“When I hear the name ‘traditional leader,’ I feel mixed goodness and badness, because sometimes they promote conflicts and lead them, and other times they look for peace and work for reconciliation.”*  
(Fisherman, Adale)

**7. On balance, participants tend to hold more negative than positive views toward a range of specific international actors. Views are most unfavorable and cynical toward the United States and Ethiopia<sup>18</sup>.**

Most participants believe that the United States does not have Somalia's interests at heart and is involved in the country only for its geopolitical interest and for access to its natural resources. They say that the U.S. could have engineered a successful peace process if it truly wanted to. On the positive side, however, a few note with appreciation that the Somali diaspora is welcome in the United States.

*"They created all of Somalia's problems. They support all warring sides, but they are pretending that they are helping."* (Family provider, Mogadishu)

*"Americans are behind Somalia's problems; they want our resources."* (Family provider, Boame)

*"When I hear USA, I feel negative, because they kill everybody who comes against their ideologies; likewise, they invade any country that contradicts their interests."* (Female, Farmer, Adale)

*"Many Somalis live in America and send remittances to people in Somalia to facilitate the cost of their daily life."* (Male, Trader, Nairobi)

Many participants refer to the ancient hostility between Somalia and Ethiopia and deem the latter the number one enemy of Somalia. They believe Ethiopia wants revenge for the 1977 Ogaden war, and they accuse the country of fueling the current conflict by bringing weapons into Somalia. Nevertheless, from a positive viewpoint, a few mention with gratitude that Somalis who flee to Ethiopia are not deported and are offered medical treatment.

*"Ethiopia was the mastermind behind the collapse of Somalia."* (Male, IDP, Galkayo North)

*"We have negative feelings toward the government of Ethiopia because it is the enemy of Somalia, and they also bring weapons into the country."*  
(Male, University student, Garowe)

*"They are not supporting Somalia. Instead, they undermine everything."*  
(Small-scale businesswoman, Bandarbeyla)

*"The Ethiopian government is the main cause of the Somali conflict; they also send or give weapons to foolish people who only know how to destroy the country."* (Family Provider, Abudwak)

*"If we go to Ethiopia, we are not deported. It is like our country."*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

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<sup>18</sup> The question asked: "Do you have positive or negative feelings or both positive and negative feelings about: United Nations, NGOs, Government of Kenya, Government of Ethiopia, Government of Uganda, Government of Burundi, Government of the United States, AMISOM?" This was not asked of traditional and religious leaders, because of the shorter discussion guide.

**8. Although more likely to be unfavorable than approving, participant views toward Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, AMISOM and the United Nations are more moderate than those toward the United States and Ethiopia.**

Some participants laud Kenya for welcoming Somalia refugees and providing a base of operations for Somali businesses. Others believe that Somalis in Kenya are poorly treated, and many assume that Kenya is not working to stabilize Somalia in order to profit from the chaos.

*“I have a good feeling [toward Kenya] because many of our people have immigrated there, and they were warmly received.”*

(Female, IDP, Mogadishu)

*“They welcome the Somali people. They created refugee camps and also welcome us in their cities and towns.”* (Female, Refugee-Returnee, Nairobi)

*“Kenya doesn’t want Somalia to become stable, and they have taken our land. In addition, they mistreat the Somali refugees in their country.”*

(Female, Trader, Qardho)

With respect to AMISOM, some participants are thankful that the troops have come to give assistance to Somalia. They appreciate that they have brought some stability to the country, that they guard Somali leaders, and that they distribute medical supplies. However, many accuse them of indiscriminate shelling and bombing, causing myriad civilian casualties. And there is resentment expressed about the fact that they are a foreign army operating on Somali soil, viewed as infringing on Somalia’s sovereignty.

*“I have a good attitude [toward AMISOM] because they guard Somali leaders, and it’s the stronghold of the government.”* (Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

*“We have a good feeling toward AMISOM because they support the TFG.”*

(Male, Farmer, Afgoye)

*“We all have bad feelings toward them because they are mercilessly killing our people.”*

(Female, Convention refugee, Ifo)

*“I have a negative feeling toward AMISOM because they are a foreign army inside Somalia, and they are intervening in Somalia’s internal affairs.”*

(Fisherman, Bandarbeyla)

As with the other countries mentioned, some participants appreciate that Uganda has given safe harbor to Somali refugees. Other attitudes are closely linked to feelings toward AMISOM. Some commend Ugandans for assisting the TFG and providing humanitarian help and are grateful that they are willing to sacrifice their lives to help secure Somalia. Others say that Uganda is intervening in Somalia purely for its own interests and that Ugandan AMISOM soldiers are massacring the Somali people.

*"I have a positive feeling for Uganda because Somalis live in Uganda peacefully and are given education, shelter and medicine."*

(Female, IDP, Afgoye)

*"I have a positive feeling toward Uganda because they came here to support Somalis."*

(Fisherman, Bandarbeyla)

*"I have a negative feeling toward Uganda because they are paid for massacring our people."*

(Female, Trader, Hobyoy)

Attitudes toward Burundi are similar to those toward Uganda, although Burundi doesn't have the perceptual benefit of having given sanctuary to Somalis in their country. What Somalis know of Burundi is through their provision of troops to AMISOM. Some appreciate that Burundians have come to Somalia to assist the government and provide humanitarian help. Others accuse the country of interfering with Somalia's affairs for their own interests (procuring generous salaries for their soldiers), and the soldiers of being mercenaries who kill innocent people and cause destruction in the course of carrying out their mandate.

*"I have a good attitude toward Burundi because they boosted our government."*

(Businessman, Galdogob)

*"We see them as friends."* (Male, IDP, Mogadishu)

*"We didn't know them, but they came and destroyed our country."*

(Female, Convention refugee, Ifo)

*"They are mercenaries."*

(Fisherman, Mogadishu)

*"They interfere with our country's affairs."*

(Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

From a positive angle, some participants say that the United Nations is a contributor to the peace process, works to improve security and has filled an important gap in helping the Somali people since the collapse of the government by giving them access to food, water and education. On the negative side, others note that although the U.N. was initially doing good work in Somalia, the organization has now essentially abandoned the country.<sup>19</sup> They say the U.N. serves the interests of the West rather than Somalia, and wants to see the conflict in Somalia continue so that it can continue to receive funding from donor countries.

*"I have a good feeling about the U.N. because they help the Somali people in many ways, be it with water, food, or education."*

(Fisherman, Hobyoy)

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<sup>19</sup> The research took place before the U.N.'s interventions in summer 2011 to combat the effects of the drought and famine in Somalia.

*“I have a positive feeling toward the U.N. because they help the needy people.”*  
(Family provider, Baledweyn)

*“I have a bad feeling about the United Nations because they are always interfering in our country.”*  
(Female, Farmer, Diinsoor)

*“The United Nations abandoned Somalia. The people have been affected by wars and drought while the U.N. has done nothing for us.”* (Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“It serves the interests of the West.”* (Male, IDP, Galkayo North)

**9. Among the list of international actors tested, participants are most favorable toward NGOs, but attitudes are not overwhelmingly so.**

Some participants commend NGOs for the development assistance they give to the Somali people – specifically, offering employment and education, delivering medicine, distributing food, and assisting communities in drilling boreholes. They also note that NGOs work in areas that the government can’t reach and convey to the world the conflict that exists in the country.

*“I have good feelings for them because they support the less fortunate and the needy, and they feed the children.”*  
(Female, IDP, Afgoye)

*“They do something for the people. They deliver medicine to hospitals; they distribute food to the needy. These organizations are good to me.”*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

However, others criticize NGOs for being too much talk and too little action – not helping as much as they promise and leaving their projects uncompleted. They also accuse them of working only out of the self-interest of their home countries rather than the interests of the Somali people, and a few charge them with embezzling aid funds meant for the population.

*“I have both a good and bad attitude [toward NGOs], because they support the Somali populace on the side of education and health but they embezzle funds meant for the population.”* (Female, Trader, Qardho)

*“I have a bad image [of NGOs]. They come and take photos and then disappear. They abuse what they take from the international community.”* (Male, Farmer, Jilib)

*“We have a negative feeling toward them because they implement the agenda of foreign people, not the agenda of our people. And they leave their projects uncompleted.”* (Businessman, Galkayo North)

### III. Autonomy and Federalism

#### 1. Participants express respect for Somaliland's accomplishments, but they are opposed to the idea of its secession.

Although most participants approve of the way Somaliland is ruling itself, the vast majority have a strong visceral reaction against secession.

Participants laud the government of Somaliland for its stability, relative peace and development efforts.

*"Somaliland is functioning well because there is peace, law and order and stability."*  
(Female, IDP, Afgoye)

*"Somaliland is doing well. They accomplished great achievements and held fair and free elections."*  
(Female, Farmer, Adale)

Nonetheless, the majority feel very strongly that, as they share a common ethnicity, language and religion, Somalis form one country that should not be divided. Some point to the divisions that currently exist in Somaliland, with not all its citizens willing to be a part of an independent country.

*"Somalia is one country and cannot be divided, but the peace and level of development [Somaliland] has reached is something we are proud of, and everybody should follow their example."*  
(Family provider, Abudwak)

*"Somaliland has done a marvelous job. It has tightened its security and strengthened its economy, but I believe they can't stand on their own. Somalia cannot be divided."* (Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*"The Somalis have one country, one language, one religion and come from one family so that cannot be divided."* (Family provider, Boame)

*"Somalia is a small country which cannot be divided into smaller portions; Somaliland cannot be separated [from the rest]."* (Male, Trader, Nairobi)

The culmination of their fears comes into focus when they declare that the secession of Somaliland will cause a domino effect – other regions of the country will feel emboldened to seek their independence, leading to the eventual disintegration of the country.

*"If they separate, the country will split into regions, and it will cause further destruction."*  
(Family provider, Bosaso)

*"I see the separation of Somaliland [in a bad light], because this opens the gates to the disintegration of the country."* (Fisherman, Hobyo)

*"It is sad that Somaliland wants to secede. Puntland will do it tomorrow, and Hiran will the same. It is not good for Somalia."* (Family provider, Baledweyn)

## 2. Most participants accept Puntland's current level of autonomy.

Participants were asked whether Puntland should retain the level of autonomy it currently enjoys or if the TFG should take back some of the region's powers. About half the groups are fully in accordance with Puntland retaining its autonomy, and about a quarter express mixed views with only a quarter of the groups in full agreement that some powers should be returned to the national government.

- The traditional and religious leaders outside of Puntland express mixed views.
- All of the groups and leaders in Puntland support the current situation.

Those who support the continuing level of autonomy believe that until there's a strong and functioning central government in Somalia, Puntland has the right to retain its own powers.

*"Puntland should keep all the powers it has because there is no strong central government."*  
(Female, Farmer, Adale)

*"I think Puntland should have its own autonomy and powers ... until a strong national government is in place."* (Male, IDP, Galkayo North)

*"We would like Puntland to keep its powers until a federal government is formed that is functioning."*  
(Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)

Among the minority who want some of Puntland's powers to revert to the TFG, some have a general concern that Puntland's retaining its full powers will ultimately lead to a wish for secession – to which, as seen earlier, they are opposed. A few are specific and mention that they want the national government to retain control over taxes, the region's natural resources, and international agreements.

*"They can have some powers regarding security, but when it comes to oil exploration and contracts with foreign companies, it is the central government's responsibility."* (Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Baledweyn)

## 3. But participants are less amenable to Puntland's break with the TFG<sup>20</sup>.

Participants were asked whether or not they agreed with Puntland's decision in January 2011 to break with the TFG.

Just under a quarter of the groups express absolute support for Puntland's pronouncement, while the rest are either unequivocally opposed or express mixed views. Importantly, even many of the groups in Puntland express mixed views. Among the traditional and religious leaders, there is a clear regional split – those outside of Puntland are opposed to the decision while those from Puntland support the region's declaration.

Those who are opposed to Puntland's decision are concerned that it brings the region one step closer to secession. They believe that Puntland, as part of Somalia, and with representatives in the TFG, should continue to work with the central government.

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<sup>20</sup> The research took place before a cooperation agreement was reached between Puntland and the TFG in August 2011.

*“I don’t think the national government will work if Puntland separates.”*  
(Female, Convention refugee, Ifo)

*“The government should give Puntland its rights, and Puntland must respect the national government and do its duties.”*  
(Female, Farmer, Jilib)

*“I don’t agree with Puntland because Puntland is one of the Somali regions. If they declare they won’t work with the central government then the rest will follow their example.”* (Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*“No, I don’t agree with the break in TFG and Puntland government relations, because Puntland was founded to be one of the federal government pillars and invested many efforts, so to cut off the relationship at this moment seems not logical and politically motivated.”*  
(Fisherman, Bandarbeyla)

Supporters of the decision claim that Puntland was forced by circumstances to do so, since the TFG is impotent, does not act in the interests of Puntland, and has not fulfilled its promises toward the region (most notably, by violating the Galkayo agreement<sup>21</sup>).

*“Yes, we agree with the Puntland government’s decision to break ties with the TFG because the TFG did not act as a central government responsible for all Somalia. They have used world donations alone, and its mandate expired, and they have done nothing for Somalia.”* (Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)

#### **4. Support for federalism has increased since the June 2010 study and rests on assurances of a mutually acceptable balance of powers between the central government and regional governments.**

A majority of participants support a system of federalism for Somalia<sup>22</sup>. This finding represents a shift in attitudes from June 2010, when only about a third of participants looked favorably upon a federal system for the country. It may be that media reports about the constitution and its provisions regarding federalism have had a positive impact on opinions<sup>23</sup>.

Traditional and religious leaders express more hesitation than other participants, however.

What is clear is that whether they support or oppose federalism, participants’ reasoning is the same: they want to avoid stoking further conflict in the country.

Those who support federalism regard it as a means for relieving growing pressure between the regions and the central government and ultimately, any demand for independence. They

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<sup>21</sup> The Galkayo agreement, signed in August 2009, affirmed Puntland’s federal vision of Somalia, provided for the TFG to share international aid with Puntland equitably, and allowed Puntland to control foreign investment within its territory (among other issues).

<sup>22</sup> Respondents were asked: “Let’s say there was a decision to have a national government but also to give some powers to lower-level governments. Is this a good or bad idea?”

<sup>23</sup> See later discussion about knowledge of the constitution.

want the division of powers to be clearly stated and agreed upon by both levels of government, in order to avoid later tensions.

*“I believe there should be separation of powers. It should be written in the constitution where everybody’s power should lie.”*

(Female, Farmer, Adale)

*“It is good that some of the central powers should be delegated to the regional states. If regions become independent, there will be conflicts about resource sharing.”* (Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

*“I think is good to give some powers to the central government and others to regional authorities. If we allow complete freedom for regional administrations, there can be problems between the two sides.”*

(Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Baledweyn)

Those who have qualms about a federal system for Somalia worry about the potential for conflict when regional government interests collide with each other or with those of the central government.

*“In my opinion, Somalia should not be a federal state because if we opt for federalism, we will have Hiran standing on its own as well as the Shabelle regions. Every group will say no one can pass through my region.*

*Now, we Somalis share the land and flag, but if we proceed with regionalism, there will be border wars.”*

(Businessman, Mogadishu)

Thus it appears the key to making Somalis feel comfortable with the idea of federalism is to convince them that the division of powers among *regions* and between *regions and the central government* will be clearly codified and implemented only after acceptance by all parties.

**5. If Somalia is divided into regional governments, participants agree that Puntland and Somaliland should form two of the states. However, there is no consensus about the potential boundaries of the other states.**

When queried, participants express varied opinions about how many states Somalia should be divided into, anywhere from 18 (each region becoming a state) down to only three (Somaliland, Puntland and South Central). Many coalesce around the notion of five states or seven states.

The one consistent opinion is that Puntland and Somaliland should retain their territorial integrity and form two of the states<sup>24</sup>. In addition, many group together the Bay and Bakool regions.

Perhaps most significantly, many participants emphasize the importance of consulting with and getting buy-in from the regions before any decisions are made.

*“The regions should agree on this; we cannot decide for them.”* (Businessman, Galkayo South)

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<sup>24</sup> In their responses to this question, participants did not address the territorial dispute between the two regions.

- 6. Although there is no consensus among participants about whether the central government or regional governments should have jurisdiction over a number of different realms, there is one area of agreement. The majority of participants concur that the central government should have jurisdiction over natural resources.**

The study presented participants with six different realms of government (health care, education, natural resources, taxes, security and police) and asked them whether they believed the central government in Somalia or a regional government should have power over that particular area<sup>25</sup>.

Participants express mixed views about all areas but one: natural resources. The overwhelming majority of groups agree that the central government should have the authority over natural resources. Consistent with the June 2010 study, they believe that natural resources belong to the country as a whole, not just to the region in which they are located.

*“The natural resources belong to all regions and should be administered by the central government.”*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“I think the central government should administer all international treaties and natural resources because these issues concern all Somalis and not just single regional states.”* (Female, Farmer, Adale)

#### IV. Clan and the Political System

- 1. Participants continue to express grave concern about the corrosive influence of clanism on Somali society.**

In the June 2010 research, participants had identified clanism as the most important source of conflict in the country. In the current study, participants continue to denounce clanism as a principal cause of conflict.

They lament a cascading series of deleterious effects that clanism has on society:

- Distrust among people of different clans ... and clan loyalties that are exploited by warlords ... leading to competition for power and civil war.
- Clan affiliation, rather than knowledge and experience, used as criteria for leadership ... causing nomination of and inability to remove ineffective leaders ... begetting discrimination against certain clans and poor governance.

*“What has destroyed our country is clanism because people are now killing each other purely based on their clan. Clan is the root of our problems.”* (Female, Student, Bosaso)

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<sup>25</sup> This question was not asked of traditional and religious leaders as the discussion guide for the one-on-one interviews was shorter.

In order to probe attitudes about clanism more deeply, participants were given a hypothetical situation. They were asked to imagine that clans no longer existed in Somalia and asked if this would be a positive or negative development.

About half the groups believe the complete absence of clans would represent progress. As noted earlier, they say that clans are at the root of much of the conflict in which Somalia has been embroiled over the past 20 years.

*“I believe clan should be abolished. This would forge a peaceful coexistence.”* (Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“I know peace would prevail without clan.”* (Small-scale businesswoman, Bandarbeyla)

Many groups and traditional and religious leaders take a more nuanced view, noting that clanism, rather than the clan system, is the problem. And a few completely reject the notion of jettisoning clans. These participants explain that clan is an extremely important means of identity in Somalia and that the problem arises only when it is used as a basis for discrimination. But they nonetheless express deep concerns about clanism.

And the fact that about half the groups concur with the idea of completely eliminating the clan system speaks to the deep level of concern participants share about its deleterious effects on society.

*“Clan is not a problem; the problem is clanism and its irresponsible uses by corrupted leaders whether they are politicians or clan leaders. According to the Koran, clan is only to be used as an identification factor among people to keep strong relations and support each other, not to hate, kill and deprive others of their rights.”* (Male, IDP, Bosaso)

*“Let us differentiate between the two. Clan is for identification only and does not create any problems, but clanism is a bad idea that has caused many problems so it is better to do away with clanism.”*  
(Traditional leader, Abudwak)

## **2. Participants maintain their complete rejection of the 4.5 system.**

Also consistent with findings from the June 2010 study, the vast majority of participants, including most religious and traditional leaders, strongly object to the 4.5 power-sharing formula. They say it is discriminatory, and that all clans should be treated equally.

Moreover, many note that this system ignores the issue of competence. They would prefer that leaders be selected on the basis of their qualifications, rather than their clan.

*“This 4.5 formula was brought by people who had self-interest and no knowledge; they wanted to secure their post through this manner.”* (Family provider, Abudwak)

*“This method of 4.5 is a kind of disease that is widening the gap between people.”*  
(Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Luuq)

*“It is not good for Somalia because it creates discrimination and mistrust in society.”*  
(Female, IDP, Mogadishu)

*“It is absolutely wrong. People are equal in everything. This formula is an obstacle toward any achievement.”*  
(Religious leader, Mogadishu)

*“It’s not good, because the minority may be more knowledgeable than those who are thinking themselves to be a higher class.”* (Female, Refugee-Returnee, Nairobi)

*“The 4.5 power-sharing formula must be dropped and people chosen on their merits.”*  
(Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Baledweyn)

### **3. Clan should have no function in governance, participants assert.**

Given their concern about the harmful influence of clan, it is not surprising that participants (including religious and traditional leaders) express almost unanimous agreement with the idea of limiting the influence of clan to the private sphere and prohibiting its authority in governance.

*“Yes, [clan] must be confined to social life and kept far away from public life and government.”*  
(Female, Student, Bosaso)

*“Yes, clan merely determines identity, as the religion teaches, but clan should not have anything to do with government.”* (Fisherman, Mogadishu)

*“It is a good idea that the government should not work on a clan basis; as you know, we are Muslims, and clanism is regarded as a dirty thing.”* (Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*“If institutions are built on clanism, they easily crumble, but if based on laws, they prevail.”*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

### **4. Some believe education and a new governance structure are the keys to eradicating clanism.**

Participants were asked for their suggestions about changing the behavior of those that act only in their clan’s interest.

Many attribute clanism to ignorance and say, perhaps unduly optimistically, that awareness and education are the keys to changing this behavior. They emphasize that Islam discourages clanism.

Some argue that only the advent of good governance not based on a clan system and laws that forbid the practice of clanism can curb a resort to its use.

*“I think that awareness-raising campaigns should be held in order to make this culture [of clanism] obsolete.”* (Traditional leader, Abudwak)

*“I think the person who administers his office through tribalism should be prosecuted and brought to justice and be replaced with somebody who can rule by justice.”* (Female, Trader, Hobyö)

Some view this phenomenon through a sociological lens and say that Somalis are raised with the mentality that they must support members of their own clan, particularly in times of distress. In addition, they note that this mindset emanates from the clan leadership. Thus, they feel it will be extremely difficult to eradicate.

*“People have been brought up in a system where clans are given priority so it’s very difficult to change their mentality.”* (Family provider, Boame)

*“Even Somali people’s blood works on clanism because people are prepared for clanism from their childhood. Young kids are taught to learn their clan even before they are taken to the Koranic schools or primary school.”* (Traditional leader, Hobyö)

## **5. Participants believe that political parties are a step forward for Somalia, but they worry that the time is not yet ripe for their emergence.**

The majority of participants, including religious and traditional leaders, support the *eventual* formation of political parties in the country. They say it is likely the only way for Somalia to move forward as political parties will replace clanism as a means for choosing leaders. They see this as a maturation of the political process.

*“If Somalia does not get political parties, it will not function because we have been trying clan in vain. Therefore, we have to graduate to political parties, giving each person the chance to elect the person of his/her choice.”* (Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“We better have political parties, rather than being in this situation. The politician will look for votes rather than fighting, killing and taking bribes.”* (Female, Farmer, Adale)

*“To construct political parties is good because it is the only thing that can change the current political situation.”* (Male, Trader, Afgoye)

But many note that the current moment is not a propitious one for the formation of political parties as the security in much of the country is too precarious. They regard security as a necessary pre-condition for setting the ground rules for a political party system. Traditional and religious leaders believe that time will be needed to educate the populace about a political party system.

*“It would be difficult; first we should get a central government that prepares rules and regulations governing political parties.”* (Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

*“It is a very good idea to form political parties who will compete on the basis of their knowledge although it is difficult to implement now because it is a new thing which requires more time to educate the people.”*  
(Traditional leader, Abudwak)

**6. Traditional and religious leaders see themselves as beneficiaries of a political party system.**

Importantly, most traditional and religious leaders believe the advent of political parties will be a positive development for them, personally. They envision themselves as part of a movement that will reward new initiatives and full participation on the part of all Somalis. They believe their power will actually be reinforced in a multi-party system as it will reward knowledge and experience.

*“No, the traditional leaders cannot be ignored, and I think [political parties] will not change anything but it will make [traditional leaders] powerful, because people will compete on knowledge, so the traditional leaders will get recognition and consideration as they have been in the past.”*

(Traditional leader, Abudwak)

*“No, nothing would change (for us); we would help together in rebuilding the country.”*

(Traditional leader, Hobyo)

**7. Participants strongly believe that clan should not be the founding principle of political parties.**

Not surprisingly, because of their antipathy toward clanism, participants are almost unanimously against the idea of organizing political parties on the basis of clan.

They say that a clan-based political party structure will simply replicate the current system under a new name. They believe such a structure will not serve the overall national interest but will instead lead to more internal disputes and civil wars.

On a practical level, they say it will precipitate the existence of numerous parties, thereby complicating the political system.

*“We have seen the fruit of clan. We don’t want to taste that same fruit because it was bitter.”*

(Family provider, Bosaso)

*“No, we have seen the negative impact of clanism and would love to try something else.”*

(Family provider, Galdogob)

*“No, clanism is what destroyed the country; nothing will go well with [clan-based parties]. It will be just a repetition.”* (Male, Pastoralist, Qardho)

*“No, nothing based on clanism can be sustained. Therefore, political parties should be based on ideologies.”*

(Traditional leader, Abudwak)

*“No, it is not good, because the parties will be numerous since each clan will form its own. The party itself will have no meaning as it will only serve the interests of the clan if they win the elections.”*

(Female, Farmer, Adale)

**8. Participants want political parties to be national in scope rather than regionally-based.**

Again, participants are practically unanimous in their view that parties should be organized on a national, rather than regional, basis<sup>26</sup>. They worry that regionally-based parties would essentially be equivalent to clan-based parties and would therefore preserve the divisive status quo.

They believe that national parties will encourage cross-fertilization among regions and help spread values common to all Somalis.

They feel that parties can be formed on the basis of policies and common goals for the country's future, such as good governance, security, economic and social development, and anti-piracy measures.

*"If the parties do not operate at a national level, we will keep the status quo."*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

*"Parties should be national so that we can all mix and share common values of Somaliism rather than clanism."* (Female, Trader, Jilib)

*"The party should have a presence in all regions of the country and bring a variety of people from all parts of the country together in order to be more representative."* (Family provider, Baledweyn)

**9. Participants claim that Somalis would support leaders from clans and regions that differed from their own.**

A majority of participants believe that Somalis would support a leader who was not a member of their clan or from their region. In most cases, they were speaking of their own potential behavior.

They say they would support a leader who is knowledgeable, has integrity, has a nationally-focused agenda and calls for peace, justice, and development. They also say the leader should have a clean record (*i.e.*, should not have been involved with the civil war of the past 20 years).

*"There could be people around choosing leaders on the basis of clan, but, I would not. I would vote for the person based on knowledge, ability and the agenda exposed to the society."*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

*"I will select [a leader] based on his education and his occupational experience."*  
(Businessman, Galkayo North)

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<sup>26</sup> This question was not asked of traditional and religious leaders as the discussion guide for the one-on-one interviews was shorter.

*“I think region is similar to clan; therefore, I will support any Somali individual who wishes to lead the country into peace and justice, without considering where he originates from.”*

(Fisherman, Adale)

*“I would support every Somali irrespective of his regional affiliation. We as traditional leaders need the return of peace and governance to the country.”* (Traditional leader, Abudwak)

A small minority believe that it would be difficult for Somalis to support a leader from another clan or region because they would worry that a person from another clan would not attend to their needs and a person from another region would not understand their priorities.

*“No, Somali people will never support a leader that doesn’t hail from their clan, because most people think a person from a different clan will not help them.”* (Female, Trader, Qardho)

### **10. In the absence of an election, some suggest candidate selection by proxies.**

Participants were asked how they would want leaders to be selected if an election were not possible<sup>27</sup>.

Most answer the question in terms of the qualities they seek in a leader, previously identified (e.g., knowledge, integrity, etc.), leaving aside the issue of who would actually pick the leadership.

Some suggest that the religious and traditional leaders put forth suggested candidates and meet together as a group to decide. Others expand the list of candidate selectors to include other segments of society, such as civil society groups and women’s groups. Interestingly, this response foreshadows the idea of using a constituent assembly, which participants were introduced to later in the discussion.

*“The traditional leaders will elect the people.”* (Male, Trader, Afgoye)

*“A [selection] committee should be appointed from the religious leaders and elders. The committee can select the right person, but not based on clan.”* (Family provider, Bandarbeyla)

*“I prefer to call the traditional leaders, religious men, intellectuals, women groups and the youth to elect the person they like.”* (Male, University student, Garowe)

### **11. Participants note a preference for a presidential system over a parliamentary one, but they have a misunderstanding of how a parliamentary system would operate.**

Participants were given a short description of a presidential versus a parliamentary system and were asked to state which system they would choose for Somalia<sup>28</sup>. A bit more than half

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<sup>27</sup> This question was not asked of traditional and religious leaders as the discussion guide for the one-on-one interviews was shorter.

the groups express a clear preference for a presidential system, while the others either express mixed views or state a preference for a parliamentary system. Most of the traditional and religious leaders favor a presidential system.

Preference for a presidential system is largely rooted in participants' experience with and distaste for the current parliament. They say the current parliament has been ineffective and is corrupt. Many participants cannot get past their frustration even while understanding that the new parliament would be elected not appointed. They believe that parliamentarians can be bribed to vote a particular way. Voting directly for the president, they assert, will bring more transparency and accountability to government.

Preference for a parliamentary system seems to mostly be a function of a mistaken understanding of how the system would operate.

- Some say that individual voting for the presidency is not possible right now because of lack of security or because of the cost – not understanding that the same concerns would exist with a vote for parliamentarians, as well.
- Some seem to believe that voting for the president directly means that political parties wouldn't exist. As noted earlier, they like the idea of the cross-fertilization of ideas they believe that political parties would engender.

These results indicate that providing clear information about the pros and cons of a presidential versus parliamentary system is necessary before Somalis can make an informed decision about which system they would prefer.

*"I prefer the people voting for the leader because this the only time I can cast my vote for the right leader of my choice."* (Female, Farmer, Diinsoor)

*"People should elect their leaders because if parliamentarians are to choose the leaders, they are bribed and may not choose the right ones."* (Family provider, Baledweyn)

*"I would not support a parliamentary election for the head of government because they elect presidents through bribery measures."* (Religious leader, Bandarbeyla)

*"Somalia cannot [financially] afford a direct presidential election because [the country] is made up of many regions, requiring a lot of resources. Thus, the parliamentary system which is easier is better for me."*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

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<sup>28</sup> Participants were asked: "There are different ways to select a leader for a government. One way is by people voting directly for the person they want to lead the government. Another way is for the people to vote for members of a parliament and those members choose the government leader. In this case, it is likely the political party that has the most members of parliament will have a strong influence on who is chosen. Which of these two ways do you prefer?"

## V. Constitution

### 1. Among participants, there is a medium-level of awareness of the IFCC and the draft constitution.

Only about half the groups have heard of the Independent Federal Constitutional Commission (IFCC), and of those, some recognize only the name but do not know their function.

A bit more than half the groups have heard about the consultative draft constitution (CDC)<sup>29</sup>. Participants in South Central are more informed than those in Puntland.

Most of the religious and traditional leaders know of the IFCC and have heard about the constitution.

Most participants have received their information through media outlets, most commonly the BBC or the Voice of America. A few participants had actually been targeted as part of the public outreach effort and were therefore very well informed (some young women IDPs in Galkayo South and some older women in Boame).

Some were able to enumerate the following features of the CDC: that a federal system of government is proposed, that it will be based on *Shari'a*, that it gives more rights and protections to women.

*"We heard that [the IFCC] had been assigned to draft a constitution for the ruling of this country."*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

*"I did not hear about what the constitution contains; I only heard from the BBC that drafting of a new constitution is in progress."* (Traditional leader, Hobyo)

*"We heard about the constitution and met with the committee. It's going to be based on Islamic Shari'a. I heard women will get more power to be included in the decision making."*  
(Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

*"Yes, I heard about the constitution committee on the radio. I heard they arrived in Mogadishu and Galkayo, asking people about the incomplete constitution draft."* (Traditional leader, Hobyo)

### 2. There is a marked increase in support for a constitution since the June 2010 study.

Positive attitudes toward a constitution for Somalia have increased since the June 2010 study. Those who profess that Somalia does not need a new constitution because the Koran should be the guiding principle for the country are a small minority, and more participants seem excited by the possibilities that a new constitution can bring and less wary of it.

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<sup>29</sup> It is not necessarily surprising that more participants have heard of the actual draft than the body that drafted it.

They have hopes that a new constitution will be able to bring peace and order by establishing a commonly agreed-upon set of laws, reduce the impact of clanism, eliminate the 4.5 power-sharing system, and define citizen's rights so that violation will have legal consequences. Those who are not already aware want reassurance that it will be based on Islamic law.

This increase in acceptance of a new constitution is likely based on some level of understanding gleaned from media coverage. The June 2010 study found an extremely low awareness of constitutionalism.

*"It is a good idea to ... prepare a constitution for Somalia which is in conflict now, and the reason is to stabilize the country and to find a way to search for the lost Somalia peace."*

(Traditional leader, Abudwak)

*"It is good for Somalia to have a new constitution because a nation without a constitution is like a camel without a guide; there must be rules to regulate life."* (Male, IDP, Mogadishu)

*"I am happy about a new constitution being made for Somalis today, and it was the right idea for it to be subjected to public scrutiny so that people can give their comments."* (Family provider, Abudwak)

*"[The constitution] is a good idea because it can bring peace but it has to be in line with the Holy Book and has to be written by people who have knowledge about the Somali culture."* (Male, Trader, Nairobi)

### **3. Participants exhibit strong enthusiasm about being part of the consultation process.**

There is general excitement and interest among participants in being part of the CDC consultation process, particularly because they are so accustomed to being disenfranchised. They welcome the opportunity to contribute their views. They are eager to know what the new constitution holds for them and want to have the ability to remove elements they see as negative and add those they view as positive.

*"Yes, we are interested in giving our views and introducing what we feel is missing from [the constitution]."*

(Female, Refugee-Returnee, Nairobi)

*"Yes, we are ready to learn the contents of the draft constitution because we'd like to contribute our ideas."*

(Male, Farmer, Jilib)

*"Yes, we are ready to learn something about the constitution. We are eager to know what it contains and also to learn of things we are not aware of."*

(Businessman, Galkayo North)

*"Yes, I'm ready to learn and then add my opinion to the new constitution. I'm happy with that idea which I certainly have not experienced before. The traditional elders were not consulted by [the IFCC] about the country's affairs so we are highly welcoming of [this opportunity]. We will even help the committee to explain to the society about the draft constitution issues."* (Traditional leader, Abudwak)

The challenge for the government is that participants' excitement can quickly turn to disappointment and anger if they do not feel that their input has been seriously considered. And some participants worry that they will be left out of the process.

*"Even if the constitution is displayed to the people, it may just end up in the big towns and not reach our district. We are ready to learn about it. It is for our own benefit."* (Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

*"I will be very interested in giving my views about the draft constitution, but I was never given a chance. Maybe for those of us who live in insecure places like Baidoa, the IFCC should give us other ways to share our views – maybe a radio talk show where we can directly call in."* (Businessman, Baidoa)

#### **4. There is pronounced interest in voting on the constitution but participants note that the lack of security in the South Central area makes the idea untenable there.**

Participants are very much in favor of the *concept* of having the opportunity to vote for or against the constitution. However, most say that the current security level in South Central precludes the ability to hold such a vote. Puntlanders believe it would be possible in their region.

*"It is a good idea for the people to vote for their new constitution because it gives them more confidence in the constitution."* (Female, IDP, Afgoye)

*"Because of security reasons, a referendum is not possible for the new constitution. There is fighting everywhere, and there is no place to gather many people. Let's see when we get peace."*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

#### **5. Participants support the notion of a constituent assembly, but they are strongly opposed to the inclusion of TFP members.**

Given their concerns about the security situation, a majority of participants support the idea of a constituent assembly voting on the constitution as long as they can feel assured that the assembly is truly representative of the citizenry.

However, the vast majority are strongly opposed to the idea of the constituent assembly being composed of the TFP members<sup>30</sup>. They say they did not choose these members, they do not represent their interests, they are uneducated and corrupt and have done nothing for the country. Some note that such an assembly would simply be a continuation of the hated 4.5 system.

Adding others to the assembly, such as civil society members, eases concerns among many – but still, half the groups oppose having any TFP members as part of the constituent assembly even if civil society participants or other non-parliamentarians are included.

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<sup>30</sup> Questions about the potential composition of a constituent assembly were not asked of traditional and religious leaders as the discussion guide for the one-on-one interviews was shorter.

*“As there is no peace in central and southern Somalia, it’s convenient to make a constituent assembly to represent the views of all citizens.”* (Female, Trader, Jilib)

*“I think it will be wrong [to include TFP members] because the current parliament has not been fairly selected by Somalis. Therefore, the Somali saying of ‘a stolen camel cannot give birth to a legitimate offspring’ is applicable. The people must select the representatives.”*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“The parliamentarians are bad people. They must not be included in the assembly. We need to make sure that civil society members, religious leaders and intellectuals are on board.”*  
(Family provider, Baledweyn)

**6. Most believe that a constituent assembly should comprise respected elites; many also want a more inclusive group.**

When asked their own preference for the composition of a constituent assembly, participants express somewhat differing opinions<sup>31</sup>.

Most believe the respected elites of the society should be selected, specifically those with specialized legal and Islamic knowledge such as lawyers, Islamic scholars, intellectuals and religious leaders. Some also believe that esteemed traditional leaders should be included.

Many also want to see other segments of society included, such as civil society organizations, youth, women, and businessmen. It is interesting that a few groups with men (principally from Puntland) specifically indicate they believe that women should be included.

*“[The constituent assembly] should be made up of intellectuals, religious scholars and traditional leaders.”*  
(Fisherman, Mogadishu)

*“I think assembly members should be selected based on their knowledge of Islam and politics and experience in law and with constitutions. They should also be people considered highly respectable by the population.”*  
(Fisherman, Hobyo)

*“The selection can be done on a regional basis whereby men and women, elites and youth are included.”*  
(Male, Pastoralist, Qardho)

Many emphasize that both “criminals” and those involved in the past and current turmoil should be excluded (e.g., insurgents, warlords, corrupt businessmen and parliamentarians).

*“All criminals must be excluded, including businessmen, parliamentarians and warlords who are in any way related to fighting and corrupt deals.”* (Businessman, Galkayo North)

<sup>31</sup> Questions about the potential composition of a constituent assembly were not asked of traditional and religious leaders as the discussion guide for the one-on-one interviews was shorter.

**7. There are mixed views on a dual-track approach for ratifying the constitution.**

Participants were asked to comment on a potential dual-track approach for voting on a new constitution: parts of Somalia voting directly and other parts being represented through a constituent assembly.

Opinion generally divides along regional/security lines. Most of those in the insecure South Central area find this arrangement to be unfair. They would prefer either waiting until security improves so that all can vote, or having *everyone* represented by a constituent assembly.

*“It is not suitable to organize a vote in only some parts of Somalia. We must wait until we restore peace to all regions.”* (Family provider, Mogadishu)

*“I think that voting must take place all at once in the country, or let that assembly represent us all. I don’t support the idea that only peaceful areas will vote.”* (Female, Trader, Hobyo)

*“No, all citizens should vote. If not, it’s just like washing a dirty cloth partly and leaving one part dirty.”* (Male, Farmer, Jilib)

Most of those in the secure Puntland region support the dual-track approach (presumably because they believe they would be able to vote themselves).

*“It is very logical if the insecure parts [of Somalia] are represented through a constituent assembly and the secure parts do their voting.”* (Fisherman, Bandarbeyla)

VI. Diaspora

**1. Participants exhibit a very welcoming attitude toward the return of the diaspora, when a sustainable level of security returns.**

The vast majority of participants welcome the return of those from the diaspora. They see them as bringing valuable knowledge and skills from abroad. As a plus, they assume that members of the diaspora will not have been inculcated into the ways of clanism. Many note, however, that the time is not yet ripe for their return – that they should wait until the country is in a more peaceful state.

*“I welcome them to come back to the country, and I believe they can do something about the country’s current condition by contributing knowledge and resources.”* (Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“I would be very happy to see the diaspora coming back since they [will] contribute to the development of the country.”* (Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

*“The homecoming of the diaspora is a very good idea. They will bring funds, investment and different types of expertise to rebuild the country.”* (Traditional leader, Abudwak)

*“I believe they should come back when an effective Somali government is born.”* (Female, Farmer, Jilib)

The small minority who have concerns about the return of the diaspora are worried that they will bring with them their foreign cultures, which they see as promoting bad morals and condoning unethical behavior.

*“It’s true, they will bring back a lot of good things, but if you look at the other side of the coin, Somalia is a 100% Muslim country; they are going to come back with new foreign cultures and values.”*

(Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

## **2. Nevertheless, there are mixed feelings about the desirability of diaspora leadership.**

The strong embrace of the diaspora does not necessarily extend to acceptance of their being part of the political leadership. Only about half of the groups have unequivocally positive views of a new diaspora leadership, and most of the rest expressed mixed opinions. Nevertheless, most of the traditional and religious leaders support the notion of diaspora leadership.

Those with positive views appreciate that members of the diaspora would bring knowledge and experience gained through living in countries that operate under the rule of law. They also welcome the idea that they would represent “fresh blood,”<sup>32</sup> not having been involved in the turmoil of the civil war.

*“I think they can be the right leaders because they lived in peaceful democratic countries where justice existed.”*

(Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Baledweyn)

Those who express hesitation about the idea of diaspora leaders feel that they have been out-of-touch with the current situation in the country. They also point to negative experiences with past and current diaspora leadership as proof that members of the diaspora do not necessarily make great leaders, in spite of their experience outside Somalia.

*“I don’t think they can be good leaders because a person who was absent from the country since the breakout of the war can’t understand the situation on the ground.”* (Male, Trader, Afgoye)

*“I oppose these people to be our leaders because they are full of foreign-inspired ideas.”*

(Family provider, Baledweyn)

*“I would prefer that diaspora leaders not come to us because they will be puppets like the current leaders.”* (Fisherman, Mogadishu)

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<sup>32</sup> Term used by family provider in Baledweyn.

## VII. Somali Youth

### 1. Participants note that the challenges that plague Somali society as a whole have a particularly harmful effect on its young people.

Participants mention a litany of challenges which face young people in Somalia, many of which afflict the population as a whole, but which they regard as having a particularly negative impact on youth:

- Lack of education/illiteracy;
- Unemployment; and
- Inadequate healthcare.

Participants say these problems fuel a resort to drug abuse and piracy among young people and make them vulnerable to recruitment by the warring parties (both government soldiers and insurgent groups) because they have no other employment prospects. And in some cases, they are forced into fighting.

*“There is no good place for [young people] because they have no education, no health care and no security.”* (Male, Trader, Afgoye)

*“Piracy and dealing in drugs has been made to seem suitable for them because there are no alternatives.”*  
(Male, University student, Garowe)

*“There is no soft spot for them because Al Shabab abducts the young people, and the government conscripts them.”* (Male, Farmer, Jilib)

*“Al Shabab ... recruits teenagers whom they tell to engage in jihad.”* (Family provider, Mogadishu)

What makes their situation even more poignant, according to participants, is that youth in Somalia have no experience of living in a country with a stable government and security – all they have known is a state of civil war.

*“The youngsters met a country destroyed. When they opened their eyes, they only saw people being killed, properties being robbed. Therefore, they think this the normal order of life.”*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

### 2. Participants believe that Somali youth must be provided with education and skills training, job opportunities, and drug rehabilitation.

In order to address these challenges, participants counsel that Somali youth need to be exposed to positive “disruptions” that will dissuade them from harmful practices. These include:

- Skills training that can lead to good job opportunities;
- Improved education;
- Access to drug rehabilitation centers; and
- Awareness seminars, on two levels:

- On a theoretical plane, seminars that expose them to the building blocks of a peaceful society; and
- From a nuts and bolts perspective, seminars that focus on the dangers of engaging in behaviors like piracy and drug use.

Participants also maintain that young people need to be disarmed. And finally, some note that opportunities for youth will naturally follow when the country establishes a stable government and the civil war comes to an end.

*“They need to drop the gun and take up the pen.”* (Female, Refugee-Returnee, Nairobi)

*“Equip them with vocational training.”* (Businessman, Galdogob)

*“Job creation ... will keep the youth safe from piracy ... a person who has skills will not join the pirates.”*  
(Male, University student, Garowe)

*“They must be given employment opportunities, education, peace awareness campaigns and taught the Islamic religion. And they must be disarmed.”* (Female, Farmer, Adale)

*“They should be given orientation on the civil wars and their problems so that they would put down their arms and take up the pen instead. Then they could work out their future and that of their people.”*  
(Fisherman, Hobyo)

*“They should be made aware of the dangerous use of narcotics, khat and other social evils.”*  
(Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

*“If a good government is installed, the opportunities for Somali youth will be better. Even those who live outside the country will then come home.”* (Female, Farmer, Jilib)

## VIII. Conflict Resolution

### 1. Participants roughly divide into three groups of opinion concerning the resolution of the conflict in the country.

The three groups:

- Reconciliation-seekers;
- Those who put their trust in faith and Allah; and
- Those who advocate the use of force.

The first two groups are more numerous than the third. Most desire a peaceful means of resolving the conflict but a sizable minority advocates the use of force.

### **2. Reconciliation-seekers believe that the government and the opposition must sit down together to negotiate and resolve their differences.**

Many want to see the circle of negotiating parties widened to include all major stakeholders in Somali society, including religious and traditional leaders and civil society, as they believe they can offer important perspectives and useful advice.

Although many of these participants see a role for the international community in terms of providing financial and moral support, they are nonetheless adamant that reconciliation must principally be a Somali-led effort. They want the negotiations to take place inside Somalia so that Somalis can have more control over the proceedings. They point to past reconciliation conferences that occurred outside the country that were completely ineffective.

*“The solution lies in holding a reconciliation meeting attended by all those who are fighting in the country so that we can move toward peace and development.”* (Female, IDP, Galkayo South)

*“The government must sit with Al Shabab in a reconciliation roundtable.”*  
(Family provider, Mogadishu)

*“All foreign forces must be sent out and a reconciliation meeting held in the country.”*  
(Female, Farmer, Adale)

*“If the reconciliation is to be successful, then all the stakeholders like traditional leaders and civil society should be included in the process.”* (Male, Agro-Pastoralist, Luuq)

*“I would say a council of religious leaders should be formed in order to move ahead from the current problems.”* (Fisherman, Hobyso)

*“The international community can do something if they are neutral and help in terms of funds and security.”*  
(Male, University student, Garowe)

*“So many reconciliations were facilitated by the international community. Another one will worsen the condition. Somali people must reconcile from within so that they can solve all their problems.”*  
(Religious leader, Mogadishu)

*“Holding conferences in foreign countries should be stopped.”* (Female, Trader, Qardho)

Not surprisingly, given the complexity of the issue, they offer few details about how these reconciliation talks could actually be achieved.

Some suggestions offered by a few:

- Both sides must agree on a ceasefire and disarm first.
- Neutral mediators must be used.
- A joint committee from both sides must facilitate the meeting.
- The insurgents must be given some type of reward or incentive for attending.
- The reconciliation must be based on Islamic principles.

### 3. Some counsel a return to the true faith of Islam.

Some participants are able to offer only an aspirational and less concrete suggestion for conflict resolution: returning to the tenets of Islam. They believe that a root cause of the chaos in Somalia is that Islam is not being adhered to as it should be. They explain that Islam is a religion of peace, and true Muslims do not shed the blood of others.

They say that good governance can be assured with the true application of Islam and recommend that all participants in the conflict ask for forgiveness from each other and pardon from Allah.

*“We should repent to Allah and ask for forgiveness, and the people must forgive each other for those bad things that happened in the past.”* (Family provider, Abudwak)

*“The solution should be to improve good governance through the practice of Islam. Somalis are all Muslims and should be left alone to solve their own problems.”*  
(Male, Trader, Nairobi)

*“We need to hold firmly to the Islamic religion.”*  
(Family provider, Galdogob)

*“People must obey Allah, and their problems will be solved.”* (Male, Pastoralist, Boame)

### 4. A minority of participants believe that force will be necessary.

A minority of participants feel that reconciliation is simply not possible at this juncture as *Al Shabab* is not willing to negotiate. They also point to past reconciliation conferences that have failed.

Thus they say that force will be necessary to put an end to the conflict. Participants in South Central are much more likely than those in Puntland to endorse the use of force.

*“I support the use of force. There have been many reconciliation conferences with no effective results.”*  
(Businessman, Galkayo South)

*“These people were asked to take peace. They refused. Therefore, use of force is the only way.”*  
(Businessman, Mogadishu)

*“Everyone who is armed will fear if a bigger force comes in.”* (Businessman, Baidoa)

*“Force should be used if peaceful means don’t work.”* (Small-scale businesswoman, Bandarbeyla)

IX. Communications

**1. There is widespread penetration of radios and mobile phones throughout the country.**

Practically every participant has a radio and at least one mobile phone at home.

In fact, the penetration of mobile phones is even wider than that of radios. Only a few participants in one group in rural Jilib lack mobile phones whereas a few participants in Bosaso and Bandarbeyla as well as Jilib do not have radios. In many households, each adult member has his or her own phone.

Most are listening to news on the radio multiple times per day and are using their mobile phones daily.

**2. The BBC and the Voice of America have wide listenership.**

Most respondents note that they regularly listen to the BBC and the Voice of America (VOA) Somali Service. As with the Somali radio stations they follow, they claim to be discriminating listeners who don't take everything they hear from the BBC or the VOA at face value.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research uncovered four basic needs expressed by Somali participants:

- A sense of agency;
- Unity;
- Equality and justice; and
- A return to the true principles of Islam.

### Sense of Agency

Participants feel buffeted by a slew of forces beyond their control<sup>33</sup>:

- Foreign actors involved in Somalia purely for their own interests who profit from the ongoing conflict;
- A government led by a succession of people they did not choose who have been unable to pull Somalia out of chaos;
- A system of power-sharing (4.5) that was imposed upon them that they resent;
- Businesspeople who profit from the anarchy;
- Environmental devastation (drought, famine); and
- Looting of the country's natural resources.

They desperately want sovereignty for Somalia and a sense of personal control over the country's affairs. They feel increasingly frustrated and resentful about their disenfranchisement. They see that leaders can unilaterally extend their time in office, without any meaningful justification or public consultation. When they do finally get a leader they believe has promise, like Farmajo, he is ousted through a political agreement between senior officials<sup>34</sup>.

Their enthusiasm about being consulted on the CDC and having some influence over whether it is finally adopted is precisely a reaction to years of disenfranchisement. The novelty of having their opinions solicited is exhilarating to them.

Widely informing Somalis about the public consultation process and determining ways for all those who are interested to contribute will be very important for gaining their support for the constitution. This process, of course, greatly raises expectations. If they feel that they have not been given an opportunity to participate or that their contribution has not been seriously considered, their initial enthusiasm will quickly turn into disappointment and anger.

Participants are accepting of the concept of using a constituent assembly to decide on approval of the constitution. To assure that they view the assembly as a suitable proxy for the citizens, it should be composed of knowledgeable, respected and diverse members of society. Participants will likely dismiss its legitimacy if it is composed solely of TFP members.

<sup>33</sup> Wording of the list from the participant's perspective.

<sup>34</sup> As noted previously, the removal of Farmajo took place after the study was completed; therefore, NDI did not receive participant reactions. However, because they made largely positive or "wait-and-see" comments about him, it could be speculated that participants were not pleased by this political development. And this positive feedback foreshadowed the demonstrations in June 2011 protesting Farmajo's removal.

The notion of dual-track voting feeds into the sense of disenfranchisement felt by residents of South Central. Consider the possibility of using only a constituent assembly – Puntland participants are not adamant about the necessity of voting when their South Central brethren cannot. To note, considering the two-decade long conflict, Somalis are willing to wait for all Somalis to vote at the same time.

With respect to any future reconciliation process, the international community should consider treading lightly – helping to bring the parties together but letting the Somalis take the lead. Consider tapping into respected members of society outside of government (religious leaders, traditional leaders, civil society groups, women’s groups, etc.) to be the public face of the effort. Also, consider holding future conferences in Somalia.

### Unity

Adding to participant concerns about forces spiraling out of their control comes an additional worry about the potential disintegration of the country. As they think of the Somalis as one people, united by a single religion, language, and culture, participants are highly focused on keeping the country’s integrity.

To reassure them about the wisdom of federalism, it will be important to demonstrate how transferring some authority to local administrations can build a strong, cohesive country – by blunting the impetus for independence. They will also need to be convinced that the division of powers will be clearly codified in the constitution and agreed upon by all parties.

### Equality and Justice

Participants are weary of a political system which picks its leadership using a clan-based power-sharing formula. They seek a system based on principles of equality and justice – one that rewards knowledge, experience, integrity and inclusivity. They reject the idea of considering clan or region when building a new governance structure. They are looking for a fresh start and are willing to wait to achieve it considering the security challenges.

Therefore, they are very intrigued by the potential of building political parties around policies and common goals for the country’s future, such as good governance, security, economic and social development, and anti-piracy measures.

Their qualms about diaspora leadership can be addressed by emphasizing why a particular person’s background (knowledge, experience, integrity, understanding) makes him or her the most suitable candidate for that position. Meeting the citizens face-to-face, when possible, can help humanize a potential candidate. Somalis are not used to personal attention from their leadership, and it can make a very lasting and meaningful impression. Again, the timing of the development of political parties was noted to be introduced into Somali governance when the security situation becomes more permissive.

Return to True Principles of Islam

Participants demonstrate a strong reverence for Islam but believe it is being misused by *Al Shabab*. Many feel that failure to follow the tenets of the religion properly is one of the major causes of the conflict. They want a government based on the true principles of Islam and a return to the proper practice of Islam in society. Emphasizing that the constitution is based on *Shari'a* will be an important means of ensuring support.

Yet what remains unclear is their level of comfort with the all-consuming role in society played by Islam, compared to 20 years ago. For the younger generation, it is the only world they have ever known.

And lastly, given their ubiquity in the country, mobile phones represent a promising vehicle for connecting people and disseminating information.

## APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	Age	Lifestyle	Urban/Rural	Education	Region	Methodology
Female	Middle	Farmer	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Fisherman	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Family Providers	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Agro-Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Businessmen	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Younger	IDPs	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Fishermen	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Traditional Leaders	Urban	Any	South Central	In-depth Interviews (3-5)
Female	Younger	Trader	Urban	Primary-Secondary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Traditional Leaders	Rural	Any	South Central	In-depth Interviews (3-5)
Male	Older	Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Younger	Family Providers	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Farmer	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Trader	Urban	Primary-Secondary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Agro-Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Traditional Leaders	Rural	Any	South Central	In-depth Interviews (3-5)
Male	Younger	Businessmen	Rural	Secondary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Farmer	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Trader	Urban	Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Agro-Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Agro-Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Family Providers	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Religious Leaders	Urban	Any	South Central	In-depth Interviews (3-5)
Male	Younger	Businessmen	Urban	Primary-Secondary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Convention Refugees	Rural	None-Primary	Kenya	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Convention Refugees	Rural	None-Primary	Kenya	Focus Group
Female	Older	Refugee Returnees	Urban	None-Primary	Kenya	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Traders	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Kenya	Focus Group

	Puntland
	Insecure Region
	IDIs

**Notes:**

“Younger” refers to participants up to age 25; “middle” refers to participants age 26-40; “older” refers to participants more than 40 years old.

“Businessmen” refers to those who deal in wholesale or imports and exports.

“IDP” means “internally displaced person.”

Gender	Age	Lifestyle	Urban/Rural	Education	Region	Methodology
Male	Middle	Businessmen	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Female	Older	Family Provider	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Older	Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Businessmen	Urban	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Female	Younger	Family Providers	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Female	Younger	Trader	Rural	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Older	Pastoralists	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Businessmen	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Farmer	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Younger	Trader	Urban	Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Older	Farmer	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	IDPs	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Fishermen	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Older	Family Provider	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Businessmen	Urban	Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Religious Leaders	Urban	Any	South Central	In-depth Interviews (3-5)
Male	Younger	Businessmen	Urban	Primary-Secondary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Younger	IDPs	Urban	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	IDPs	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Older	Farmer	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Trader	Rural	None-Primary	South Central	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Family Providers	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Older	Religious Leaders	Rural	Any	Puntland	In-depth Interviews (3-5)
Male	Younger	Fisherman	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Female	Younger	Small-scale business	Urban	Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Female	Middle	Family Providers	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Older	IDPs	Urban	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Female	Younger	Students	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Businessmen	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Middle	IDPs	Rural	None-Primary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Middle	Businessmen	Urban	Primary-Secondary	Puntland	Focus Group
Male	Younger	Students	Urban	University	Puntland	Focus Group

	Puntland
	Insecure Region
	IDIs

**Notes:**

“Younger” refers to participants up to age 25; “middle” refers to participants age 26-40; “older” refers to participants more than 40 years old.

“Businessmen” refers to those who deal in wholesale or imports and exports.

“IDP” means “internally displaced person.”

## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY NOTES

**Focus Group Research:** Focus groups are open-ended group interviews directed by a moderator and following a pre-set guideline. The purpose of focus group research is to understand the attitudes, opinions and experiences of participants who are recruited for the exercise. Focus groups are particularly useful in gaining a deeper appreciation for the motivations, feelings and values behind participants' reactions. In addition, the group format enables respondents to participate in an exchange of ideas – thus revealing a more in-depth understanding of why opinions are held – that may not emerge in individual in-depth interviews or quantitative surveys. Focus group discussions are comprised of a small number of participants, typically 8-12 per group. However, depending on the situation, groups may be slightly smaller or larger than the ideal. For example, a women's group in a more isolated area may benefit from being larger because it is likely that one or more of the participants will refuse to speak at length, even if pressed.

Focus groups are recruited to be homogeneous – so, for example, men's and women's groups are conducted separately – to enhance the comfort level of the participants and to clarify the views of a particular sub-group. The number of groups conducted varies widely based on the goals of the research, but the total number of participants is always relatively small and cannot be considered statistically representative of the larger population. It is important to always be aware that focus groups are a qualitative, and not a quantitative, research tool.

**Group Composition:** The focus groups in this report were stratified by gender, age, lifestyle and education. Single clan groups were conducted where possible.

**Age:** Based on experience from past research in Africa, the age categories used are broadly defined as “younger,” “middle” or “older.” Younger refers to participants up to age 25, middle refers to participants ages 26-40, and older refers to participants over age 40. Given the difficulty of gathering participants in largely rural areas and since some people in Somalia do not know their ages; the categories are used as a general guideline rather than as a strictly enforced criterion.

**Education:** Participants sampled in the groups had widely varying degrees of education, ranging from none through university. As much as possible, the groups were stratified by educational background. We did not attempt to stratify by education when we were recruiting special groups, such as traditional leaders, since in that case the category of participant was the more important criterion.

**Leadership Roles:** Groups are conducted separately with area leaders and ordinary citizens to prevent undue influence. In addition, traditional authorities and government officials are not allowed to sit in on discussions with ordinary citizens, even as observers. On the rare occasion when an area leader demands to be part of a group in which they were not meant to participate, that data is either excluded from the analysis or compared to the data from other groups to see if it is at variance.

**Logistics and Staffing:** The logistical challenges of conducting research in a war-torn country such as Somalia are immense. NDI worked in partnership with a group of seven (7) Somali CSOs that are active in Puntland and South Central as well as one that works among the diaspora in Kenya.<sup>35</sup> To carry out the research, the CSOs were able to use the strong relationships they have forged in the regions in which they work. Three of the CSOs conducted the research in *Al Shabab*-controlled regions and performed enhanced due diligence to ensure the security of staff and financials.

**Group Locations:** The 54 focus groups and 28 one-on-one interviews outlined in this report were conducted in 23 locations throughout Somalia and Kenya (see the map at the beginning of this report and Appendix A for a list of focus group locations.)

**Facilities:** In more rural areas, there are few structures appropriate for focus group discussions. As a result, groups were sometimes conducted in open-air settings, although this reduces the privacy of the group.

**Outside Influence:** In some cases, local authorities are informed of the research activities before they begin. However, every effort is made to ensure there is no undue influence exerted on the participants in the groups. The focus group guideline is not shared with local authorities prior to the group, except in the rare cases when disclosure is required to proceed with the research. Also, in the majority of instances, the participants are gathered in some random fashion. In this study, there was no case in which the findings from one or more groups differed radically from findings in the groups overall, which suggests that any local influence that may have occurred did not impact the research.

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<sup>35</sup> In consideration of the security of its local partners, NDI will not disclose the names of the organizations.

## APPENDIX C: MODERATOR'S GUIDELINES

### Focus Groups

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am trying to learn more about what citizens in the different regions of Somalia think about some important issues. I am neutral and do not represent any government office. I work for a non-governmental organization (NGO), and I am just here to collect information so that others can understand your situation here in [NAME OF VILLAGE/TOWN] better. I am the facilitator for today's discussion.

I want everyone to know that:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Everyone's opinion is equally important. We want everyone to speak.
- If you disagree with someone, that is okay.
- This discussion is only between those of us here.
- I have this recorder to help me when I write the report. Your name will not be used in the report. The report will only say a [woman/man] from [location] said this or that. [DEMONSTRATE RECORDER IF NECESSARY]
- The person here is taking notes to help with the report.
- Please speak loudly so the recorder can pick up your voice.

Thank you. Any questions before we begin? Now let us begin.

#### II. COUNTRY DIRECTION AND CONFLICT

1. How are things in Somalia right now – are they going in the right direction or wrong direction? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

2. What are the main three problems you have in your community now?

3. I am going to read you a list of important issues facing Somalia. By order of importance, what are the main three immediate priorities for people in your community?

**[ASK PEOPLE, AS A GROUP, TO DECIDE WHICH ITEM IS NUMBER 1, WHICH ITEM IS NUMBER 2 AND WHICH ITEM IS NUMBER 3. ROTATE LIST AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS.]**

- Security (movement, access to land, etc.)

- Getting enough food – food security
- Access to health services (health centers, drugs, etc.)
- Access to education services (schools, materials, etc.)
- Getting enough water (sufficient, quality, more pumps, etc.)
- Getting shelter and shelter materials
- Employment opportunities

4. What are the main issues that caused the current conflict?

5. Now I'm going to read a list of issues that some observers have identified as sources of the current conflict in Somalia. For each, please tell me if you agree or disagree that this issue is a source of the current conflict in Somalia:

**[ROTATE THE ORDER OF ISSUES FROM GROUP TO GROUP]**

- Religious extremism
- Clanism
- International intervention
- Lack of governance

**[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH ISSUE: Please explain your answer.]**

6. Are there any groups of people who are profiting from the current conflict?

- a. If so, who?
- b. How are they profiting?
- c. What do you think about this?

7. **[IF NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY, ASK:]** Do you think the business community in Somalia is profiting in any way from the current conflict?

- a. If so, how?
- b. What do you think about this?

8. How safe do you feel in the area in which you live now?

9. **[FOR THOSE WHO FEEL UNSAFE:]** What is making you feel unsafe?

10. At which point in time would you say that you felt the situation was the best for Somalia:

- During the time of the government in the 1970's and 1980's
- At the time of the warlords, between 1991-2004
- Between 2006-2009, after Ethiopia sent troops to Somalia and when the current Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was first set up
- From 2009 until now

**[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

11. What should be done to improve the security situation in your area?

a. What should be done to improve the security situation in Somalia as a whole?

12. There are private security firms that want to work in Somalia to protect government leaders, train Somali troops, and fight against pirates and insurgent groups. Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing if the government hires private security firms? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

### III. GOVERNANCE

1. Please tell me how you would rate the job the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is doing in governing Somalia – Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. **[FOLLOW-UP: What is the reason for your answer?]**

2. How do you suggest that the TFG can improve?

3. Do you think Somaliland is functioning well as an autonomous government separate from the rest of Somalia? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

4. Somaliland officials recently said they would like to hold a self-determination referendum to become their own independent country. Is this a good thing or bad thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

5. Puntland is part of Somalia but it runs its affairs mostly separately from the national government. This is called autonomy. Do you think that Puntland should keep all of the powers that it now has OR should some of the powers instead be those of the national government? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why /Why not?]**

6. Let's say there was a decision to have a national government in Somalia but also to give some powers to lower-level governments. Is this a good or bad idea? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

7. These lower-level governments might be called regions, districts or states. If you could choose, where would these lower-level governments be?

8. In what areas would you like the national government to have the main power, and in what areas would you like the lower-level government to have the main power, from the following list:

**[ASK ONE BY ONE, AND ROTATE ORDER FROM AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS]**

- a. Health Care – more powers for national or lower-level government and why?
- b. Education – more powers for national or lower-level government and why?

- c. Natural Resources – more powers for national or lower-level government and why?
  - d. Taxes – more powers for national or lower-level government and why?
  - e. Security – more powers for national or lower-level government and why?
  - f. Police – more powers for national or lower-level government and why?
9. In January, Puntland said it was breaking with the TFG and that the Mogadishu government “does not represent Puntland in international forums.” Puntland also called on the United Nations to reconsider its position and support for the TFG.
- a. Do you agree or disagree with this decision of the Puntland government?  
**[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**
10. Let’s just pretend for a minute that clans no longer existed in Somalia. Would this be a good thing or a bad thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**
11. Again, just pretending for a minute, let’s say that clans still existed in Somalia but they had influence only in private or social life but had no influence in public life and governance. Would this be a good thing or a bad thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**
12. Do you think the 4.5 power-sharing formula is good for Somalia? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
13. If clans are not used as a basis to choose government leaders, how would you recommend choosing leaders to be in the government if an election was not possible?
14. Many people say they hate clanism, but at the same time many people give more importance to the interest of their clan. How do you explain this?
- a. What can be done to change the behavior of those that act only in their clan’s interest?
15. Now I’d like to talk about political parties. A political party is an organization that typically seeks to influence government policy, usually by nominating their own candidates and trying to seat them in political office. Parties often have an expressed ideology or vision. Do you think Somalia should have political parties? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**
16. How do you think a political party would be organized in Somalia ... in other words, what common interests would bring people together to form a political party?
17. Let’s say that political parties were created in Somalia. Would it be a good thing or a bad thing if political parties in Somalia were organized according to clan? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**
18. Should these political parties be confined to specific regions or should they be national parties? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

19. Do you think people in Somalia would ever support a political leader who wasn't from their own clan? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

20. Do you think people in Somalia would ever support a political leader who wasn't from their own region? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

21. There are different ways to select a leader for a government. One way is by people voting directly for the person they want to lead the government. Another way is for the people to vote for members of a parliament and those members choose the government leader. In this case, it is likely the political party that has the most members of parliament will have a strong influence on who is chosen. Which of these two ways do you prefer? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

22. Do you have positive or negative feelings or both positive and negative feelings about:

**[ROTATE LIST AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS]**

- *Al Shabab*
- *Ahlu Sunnah*
- Traditional leaders in Somalia
- Religious leaders in Somalia

**[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH GROUP: Why do you say that?]**

23. Do you have positive or negative feelings or both positive and negative feelings about:

**[ROTATE LIST AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS]**

- Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed
- Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan
- Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo
- Ahmed M. Mahamoud Silanyo
- Abdirahman Mohamud Farole

**[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH PERSON: Why do you say that?]**

## IV. CONSTITUTION

1. Have you heard of the Independent Federal Constitution Commission (IFCC) of Somalia?

a. If so, what do you know about the commission and its work?

2. What have you heard about a new constitution for Somalia?

a. Where did you receive your information?

3. Do you think it would be a good thing or not a good thing for Somalia to have a new constitution? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

**[IF NECESSARY, PROVIDE THIS DEFINITION:]**

*A constitution is a set of rules for government. It defines what kind of government there will be and what powers a government will have. A constitution also defines limits to a government's powers. A constitution can also guarantee certain rights and freedoms to the people who are governed. A constitution is the strongest law in the country and everyone must follow it, from the ordinary people of Somalia to the leaders of government to the traditional and religious leaders.*

4. The IFCC prepared a draft constitution for in August 2010. There will be a two-month public consultation period on the draft to gather the Somali people's views of what should be included in the final constitution.

a. Are you interested in learning what is contained in the draft of the constitution?

**[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

b. Are you interested in giving your views about the draft of the constitution?

**[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

5. In some countries, citizens can vote for or against a new constitution – do you think that is a good thing or not a good thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

a. Do you think would be possible to hold a vote on a new constitution in Somalia right now? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

6. Sometimes a vote on a new constitution is not possible for security reasons or because there is not enough time. Instead, a constituent assembly is organized. This is a group of people who are brought together to represent the views of all citizens, and it makes the decision on whether to approve a new constitution rather than having every person in the country vote. How would you feel about a constituent assembly in Somalia deciding whether or not to approve a new constitution? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

7. If a constituent assembly is formed in Somalia, who should make up this group of representatives?

a. How should the members of the constituent assembly be chosen?

8. How would you feel if the constituent assembly were made up of the Transitional Federal Parliament members? Would this be acceptable to you? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

9. How about if the constituent assembly were made up of the Transitional Federal Parliament members plus others, such as members of civil society organizations? Would this be acceptable to you? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

10. If parts of Somalia were able to vote on a new constitution and other parts of Somalia could not and would be represented instead through a constituent assembly, how would you feel about that? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

11. Have you heard anything about the mandate of the TFP being extended for three years?  
**[RECORD, FOR EACH GROUP, IF PEOPLE GENERALLY KNOW OR DO NOT KNOW]**

12. The TFP has decided to extend its mandate for three years. Is this a good or bad thing?  
**[FOLLOW UP: Why do you say that?]**

## **V. DIASPORA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

1. Many Somalis have left the country in the last 20 years. How would you feel about their returning? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

2. Do you think Somalis from the diaspora can be good leaders for Somalia? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

3. Do you have positive or negative feelings or both positive and negative feelings about:

**[ROTATE LIST AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS]**

- United Nations
- NGOs
- Government of Kenya
- Government of Ethiopia
- Government of Uganda
- Government of Burundi
- Government of the United States
- African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

**[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH GROUP: Why do you say that?]**

## **VI. ISLAM AND ISLAMIC LAW**

1. How has the practice of Islam in Somalia changed in the last 10 years?

2. Do you think the actions of *Al Shabab* and *Ablu Sunnah* are in line with Islamic law?  
**[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

## **VII. YOUTH**

1. What challenges do young people in Somalia face?

2. What should be done to improve opportunities for young people in Somalia?

## VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Does anyone in your home own a radio?
2. How many times a week do you listen to the radio (either a radio in your home or a radio owned by someone else)?
3. How many times a week do you listen to the following:
  - a. Radio Mogadishu
    - i. Do you trust the information they give? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
  - b. Radio Shabelle
    - i. Do you trust the information they give? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
  - c. Radio Bar-Kulan
    - i. Do you trust the information they give? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
  - d. BBC
    - i. Do you trust the information they give? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
  - e. Voice of America
    - i. Do you trust the information they give? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
  - f. Any other stations **(PLEASE NAME THEM)**
    - i. Do you trust the information they give? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**
4. Does anyone in your home use a mobile phone?
5. How many times a week do you use a mobile phone (either owned by you or someone else)?

## IX. THE FUTURE

1. Should the international community continue to play a role in Somalia?
  - a. If so, what should their role be?
2. What do you think is the solution for the current conflict in Somalia?
3. **[IF NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY]:** Do you think the use of force will be necessary or can the conflict be solved through peaceful means? **[FOLLOW-UP: Please explain your answer.]**

4. Some people have said that there needs to be reconciliation between the government and the opposing forces. What do you think needs to happen for this reconciliation to be successful?

5. **[IF NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY]:** Should the international community have a role in assisting this reconciliation? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

a. If so, what should their role be?

## One-on-One Interviews

### I. INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am trying to learn more about what citizens in the different regions of Somalia think about some important issues. I am neutral and do not represent any government office. I work for a non-governmental organization (NGO), and I am just here to collect information so that others can understand your situation here in [NAME OF VILLAGE/TOWN] better. I am the facilitator for today's discussion.

I want everyone to know that:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- This discussion is only between those of us here.
- I have this recorder to help me when I write the report. Your name will not be used in the report. The report will only say a [man] from [location] said this or that. [DEMONSTRATE RECORDER IF NECESSARY]
- The person here is taking notes to help with the report.
- Please speak loudly so the recorder can pick up your voice.

Thank you. Any questions before we begin? Now let us begin.

### II. COUNTRY DIRECTION AND CONFLICT

1. How are things in Somalia right now – are they going in the right direction or wrong direction? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

2. Now I'm going to read a list of issues that some observers have identified as sources of the current conflict in Somalia. For each, please tell me if you agree or disagree that this issue is a source of the current conflict in Somalia:

#### **[ROTATE THE ORDER OF ISSUES FROM GROUP TO GROUP]**

- Religious extremism
- Clanism
- International intervention
- Lack of governance

#### **[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH ISSUE: Please explain your answer.]**

3. Are there any groups of people who are profiting from the current conflict?

a. If so, who?

- b. How are they profiting?
  - c. What do you think about this?
4. **[IF NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY, ASK:]** Do you think the business community in Somalia is profiting in any way from the current conflict?
  - a. If so, how?
  - b. What do you think about this?
5. At which point in time would you say that you felt the situation was the best for Somalia:
  - During the time of the government in the 1970's and 1980's
  - At the time of the warlords, between 1991-2004
  - Between 2006-2009, after Ethiopia sent troops to Somalia and when the current Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was first set up
  - From 2009 until now

**[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

6. There are private security firms that want to work in Somalia to protect government leaders, train Somali troops, and fight against pirates and insurgent groups. Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing if the government hires private security firms? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

### III. GOVERNANCE

1. Please tell me how you would rate the job the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is doing in governing Somalia – Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. **[FOLLOW-UP: What is the reason for your answer?]**
2. How do you suggest that the TFG can improve?
3. Somaliland officials recently said they would like to hold a self-determination referendum to become their own independent country. Is this a good thing or bad thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**
4. Puntland is part of Somalia but it runs its affairs mostly separately from the national government. This is called autonomy. Do you think that Puntland should keep all of the powers that it now has OR should some of the powers instead be those of the national government? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why /Why not?]**
5. Let's say there was a decision to have a national government in Somalia but also to give some powers to lower-level governments. Is this a good or bad idea? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

6. These lower-level governments might be called regions, districts or states. If you could choose, where would these lower-level governments be?

7. In January, Puntland said it was breaking with the TFG and that the Mogadishu government “does not represent Puntland in international forums.” Puntland also called on the United Nations to reconsider its position and support for the TFG.

a. Do you agree or disagree with this decision of the Puntland government?  
**[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

8. Let’s just pretend for a minute that clans no longer existed in Somalia. Would this be a good thing or a bad thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

9. Again, just pretending for a minute, let’s say that clans still existed in Somalia but they had influence only in private or social life but had no influence in public life and governance. Would this be a good thing or a bad thing? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

10. Do you think the 4.5 power-sharing formula is good for Somalia? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

11. Many people say they hate clanism, but at the same time many people give more importance to the interest of their clan. How do you explain this?

a. What can be done to change the behavior of those that act only in their clan’s interest?

12. Now I’d like to talk about political parties. A political party is an organization that typically seeks to influence government policy, usually by nominating their own candidates and trying to seat them in political office. Parties often have an expressed ideology or vision. Do you think Somalia should have political parties? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

13. If Somalia had political parties, would this change your authority as a [traditional/religious] leader?

a. If so, how?

14. Let’s say that political parties were created in Somalia. Would it be a good thing or a bad thing if political parties in Somalia were organized according to clan? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

15. Would you ever support a political leader who wasn’t from your own clan? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

16. Would you ever support a political leader who wasn’t from your own region? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

17. There are different ways to select a leader for a government. One way is by people voting directly for the person they want to lead the government. Another way is for the people to vote for members of a parliament and those members choose the government leader. In this case, it is likely the political party that has the most members of parliament will have a strong influence on who is chosen. Which of these two ways do you prefer? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why do you say that?]**

18. Do you have positive or negative feelings or both positive and negative feelings about:

**[ROTATE LIST AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS]**

- *Al Shabab*
- *Ablu Sunnah*

**[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH GROUP: Why do you say that?]**

19. Do you have positive or negative feelings or both positive and negative feelings about:

**[ROTATE LIST AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS]**

- Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed
- Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan
- Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo
- Ahmed M. Mahamoud Silanyo
- Abdirahman Mohamud Farole

**[FOLLOW-UP AFTER EACH PERSON: Why do you say that?]**

## IV. CONSTITUTION

1. Have you heard of the Independent Federal Constitution Commission (IFCC) of Somalia?

a. If so, what do you know about the commission and its work?

2. What have you heard about a new constitution for Somalia?

a. Where did you receive your information?

3. Do you think it would be a good thing or not a good thing for Somalia to have a new constitution? **[FOLLOW-UP: Why/Why not?]**

**[IF NECESSARY, PROVIDE THIS DEFINITION:]**

*A constitution is a set of rules for government. It defines what kind of government there will be and what powers a government will have. A constitution also defines limits to a government's powers. A constitution can also guarantee certain rights and freedoms to the people who are governed. A constitution is the strongest*

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2. Some people have said that there needs to be reconciliation between the government and the opposing forces. What do you think needs to happen for this reconciliation to be successful?
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  - a. If so, what should their role be?

## APPENDIX D: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Andrea L. Levy** is an independent consultant to several organizations, including the National Democratic Institute. She has worked in the research field for 19 years. She was formerly the Research Program Manager for NDI in Sudan and has also managed a research study for NDI in Burundi. Her international research experience includes projects implemented for the governments of Poland, Bolivia, Colombia, Wales, Indonesia and the Bahamas. Previous to working with NDI, she was senior vice president and director of research at SS+K in New York, where she managed and conducted opinion research for Fortune 500 companies from a variety of industries. She holds a master's degree in international relations from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.





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