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CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF SOMALIA

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Abstract

Somalia's national security landscape is deeply shaped by its complex cultural heritage, which is grounded in clan-based social organization, the application of customary law (xeer), and Islamic principles. These traditional frameworks play a critical role in fostering social cohesion, local dispute resolution, and informal governance, particularly in regions where state structures are weak or absent. However, they also present significant challenges to the development of a centralized and cohesive national security system. This study examines the dual role of Somali cultural institutions in both promoting local stability and hindering national integration. It explores how these indigenous systems intersect with geographical vulnerabilities, external military interests, and fragile state-building processes. Employing a qualitative case study approach, and guided by a critical realist ontology and interpretivist paradigm, the research draws on data collected through expert interviews and the thematic analysis of primary and secondary sources. Results indicate that while elders and clan networks are instrumental in maintaining order and legitimacy at the local level, their autonomous operations often conflict with federal initiatives. The study reports a strong level of agreement among respondents (mean = 3.93) that cultural systems influence national security outcomes. Moreover, qualitative insights reveal that parallel authority structures, including clan militias and religious leadership, complicate national policymaking and undermine effective coordination with foreign actors. The findings highlight the urgent need to harmonize traditional mechanisms with formal institutions. The study concludes that culturally grounded strategies are essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable security in Somalia and recommends a policy framework that integrates traditional governance into national security planning.

Keywords: National Security, Culture, Clan System, Xeer, Traditional Governance, Islam, Security Policy, Customary Law, Governance

Introduction

Understanding Somalia's national security requires a critical analysis of the country's deep-rooted cultural institutions that continue to shape its social and political dynamics (Abdullahi, 2021). While Somalia's strategic location and fragmented state structures have often been cited as key factors influencing its security trajectory, it is equally important to acknowledge the foundational role of clan systems, traditional laws, and religious practices in both supporting and hindering national cohesion. These cultural elements have historically substituted for formal governance mechanisms, especially in periods of state collapse, yet their informal authority can also obstruct the development of a unified and effective security framework (Ali, 2023). At the heart of Somali society lies the clan system a complex and enduring structure that governs social identity, political alliances, and access to resources. In many cases, allegiance to one's clan takes precedence over loyalty to the national

government. This dynamic often leads to localized power struggles and contributes to the proliferation of armed clan-based militias, which in turn weaken efforts to establish a centralized security apparatus (Abdullahi, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2021). While clans provide vital community support and conflict mediation, their influence over political processes has made it difficult to achieve national unity or enforce uniform security policies across regions.

The customary legal framework known as *xeer* serves as a critical tool for dispute resolution and communal governance. Administered by elders, *xeer* promotes reconciliation and mutual compensation over retributive justice. Its community-centered approach has proven valuable in managing local conflicts, particularly in rural areas with limited state presence (Warsame & Ibrahim, 2022). However, the emphasis on clan autonomy within *xeer* can clash with national legal norms and undermine state-led judicial reforms. In some instances, traditional verdicts issued by clan elders contradict federal legislation, leading to parallel systems of authority and weakening state legitimacy (UNDP, 2020).

Religious identity, specifically Islam, is another major influence on Somali public life. As a predominantly Sunni Muslim country, religious leaders and institutions often command strong societal trust. These actors have played constructive roles in promoting peace and supporting communities during times of crisis. They have facilitated reconciliation processes and filled gaps left by the absence of public services (Mohamed & Elmi, 2021). Nevertheless, the manipulation of religious doctrine by extremist groups remains a significant challenge. Organizations like Al-Shabaab exploit religious sentiments to recruit youth and justify acts of terror, thereby turning faith into a battleground for ideological control (UNODC, 2023).

The interplay between these cultural systems clan leadership, traditional law, and religious authority has led to a fragmented landscape of governance. While the federal model was designed to accommodate Somalia's cultural and regional diversity, it has not succeeded in harmonizing these informal structures with the central government. Instead, the result has often been parallel systems of governance, weak coordination, and inconsistent security enforcement across different federal member states (Heritage Institute, 2023). This study investigates the multifaceted role of Somalia's cultural traditions in shaping national security outcomes. It considers how the entrenched authority of clans, elders, and religious figures contributes to both resilience and vulnerability in the security sector. By adopting a culturally informed perspective, the research advocates for inclusive approaches that incorporate traditional governance into national policy frameworks, aiming to enhance local legitimacy, cohesion, and long-term stability.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism. Constructivism is a theory in international relations that emphasizes the social construction of reality, arguing that key elements of international and national politics such as security, threats, and interests are shaped by social interaction, culture, and shared norms rather than purely material factors (Wendt, 1992; Hopf, 1998). This theory asserts that identities and beliefs held by social groups inform their political behavior, which in turn shapes institutional development and state policies.

Applied to Somalia, constructivism highlights how clan identities, customary law (*xeer*), and religious values construct social realities that profoundly influence political legitimacy and security arrangements. Somali clan affiliations, for instance, shape how individuals view authority, trust, and

loyalty often prioritizing clan allegiance over national unity (Abdullahi & Ibrahim, 2022; Mohamed & Warsame, 2020). Similarly, the role of Islamic tradition in Somali society reflects shared cultural meanings that influence political discourse and security policy (Yusuf & Mahmoud, 2022). From a constructivist perspective, the fragmentation of Somalia's security apparatus is not just institutional but deeply embedded in the country's social and cultural fabric (Heritage Institute, 2023). By focusing on the importance of ideational factors, constructivism helps explain why efforts to impose external or centralized security solutions often fail in Somalia. National security, in this view, must be culturally embedded, reflecting the social norms and identities of local populations (East Africa Security Outlook, 2023; UNODC, 2023).

Human Security Theory. Human Security Theory emerged in the post–Cold War period as a critique of traditional, state-centered notions of security. It shifts the focus from safeguarding state borders to ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals and communities (UNDP, 1994; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). Human security includes economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. In Somalia's context, human security theory underscores the importance of addressing community-level vulnerabilities rooted in cultural dynamics. For example, *xeer*, while informal, provides personal and community security where formal systems are absent. The erosion or exclusion of these systems from national frameworks can increase insecurity by leaving communities without trusted mechanisms for justice and conflict resolution (Mohamed & Abdi, 2021; UNDP, 2020). Moreover, human security theory encourages a culturally sensitive approach to state-building by advocating for inclusive policies that reflect local values, traditions, and social contracts. In Somalia, where national security is intertwined with the capacity of traditional structures to resolve disputes and provide order, human security theory legitimizes the integration of cultural governance mechanisms into national policy frameworks (Warsame & Ibrahim, 2022; Abdullahi & Ibrahim, 2022).

Clan-Based Social Structures and Customary Law (Xeer) on Somalia's National Security

Clan-based social organization remains a defining feature of Somali society and plays a crucial role in the country's national security landscape. The Somali clan system, composed of complex lineages and sub-clans, governs social behavior and allegiance, often superseding loyalty to formal state institutions (Abdullahi, 2021). The customary legal system known as *xeer*, administered by elders, governs disputes, enforces compensation-based justice, and facilitates reconciliation. While *xeer* and clan elders have maintained relative peace in stateless areas, their dominance has also impeded the central government's efforts to extend formal governance (Warsame & Ibrahim, 2022). For example, regions like Puntland and Somaliland have relied extensively on traditional structures for stability but have often resisted integration with the federal security framework (Heritage Institute, 2023).

Previous studies have employed qualitative case studies and ethnographic methods to explore the operationalization of *xeer* in conflict resolution. Ali (2023) found that *xeer*-based dispute resolution systems were more trusted than formal courts in rural areas due to cultural familiarity and accessibility. However, the absence of uniform application and susceptibility to clan bias also poses challenges to national cohesion. International Crisis Group (2021) emphasized that while the clan system can serve as a foundation for localized security, its politicization has led to armed mobilizations and competition over state resources. Thus, balancing the influence of traditional systems with formal national security institutions is a key challenge in Somalia's state-building process.

2.1.4. The Dual Role of Islamic Traditions in Promoting Stability and Contributing to Radicalization

Islam is deeply rooted in Somali identity and culture, with nearly the entire population adhering to Sunni Islam. Religious leaders and networks have historically played a constructive role in promoting moral values, education, and social cohesion (Mohamed & Elmi, 2021). Several community-based organizations led by Islamic scholars have engaged in peace building initiatives and mediation between warring clans. For instance, the Al-Islah movement promoted non-violence and national unity during the civil war (Ahmed, 2020). Such examples highlight the positive role of Islam in maintaining societal order and reducing inter-clan conflicts.

However, the religious landscape has also been exploited by extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab, who use radical interpretations of Islam to justify violence and recruit followers (UNODC, 2023). These groups target disillusioned youth and marginalized communities with promises of justice, identity, and economic stability areas where the state has largely failed. In a field study conducted by Yusuf (2021), interviews with former Al-Shabaab members revealed that many joined not out of ideological commitment but due to socio-economic grievances and the appeal of religious legitimacy. The dual nature of Islamic influence presents a dilemma: while faith-based actors can support peace building, religious radicalization poses one of the most serious threats to Somalia's national security.

Integrating Traditional Governance Systems into Formal National Security Frameworks

Scholars and practitioners increasingly argue that successful state-building in Somalia must involve the harmonization of traditional governance systems with formal state institutions (UNDP, 2020). Traditional authorities, clan elders, religious leaders, and local mediators often command more legitimacy than official actors, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas. Integrating these actors into national policy frameworks could strengthen the delivery of security and justice, improve information sharing, and foster local trust in the state (Ali, 2023).

Case studies in regions like South-Central Somalia suggest that hybrid models of governance combining traditional and formal mechanisms are more effective in conflict prevention than top-down approaches (Heritage Institute, 2023). For example, community policing initiatives that include clan elders and religious figures have improved surveillance and early warning systems (Abdullahi, 2021). Despite their potential, these models face challenges such as lack of standardized protocols, accountability gaps, and tensions between customary practices and international human rights standards (Warsame & Ibrahim, 2022). Methodologically, recent research has used participatory action research (PAR) and policy analysis to evaluate pilot programs integrating customary and formal governance. Findings consistently show that inclusive security strategies those that reflect Somalia's cultural realities are more likely to succeed in fragile state contexts (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007; Mohamed & Elmi, 2021). Therefore, policy reforms must not seek to replace cultural traditions but to strategically incorporate them into national systems for durable peace and security.

Research Gap

While a significant body of literature has explored Somalia's national security challenges particularly in relation to terrorism, state fragility, and geopolitical competition there remains a notable gap in understanding how deeply rooted cultural traditions influence national security outcomes. Existing studies tend to focus on formal state security institutions or external interventions (Heritage Institute, 2023; International Crisis Group, 2021), often neglecting the intricate ways in which clan systems, customary law (xeer), and religious practices shape both security provision and conflict dynamics.

Moreover, while some research acknowledges the positive role of traditional governance in maintaining local peace (Warsame & Ibrahim, 2022), few studies critically assess the tensions and opportunities that arise when integrating these systems into formal national frameworks. Most analyses treat culture as a background factor, rather than a core component of national security policy. Additionally, the dual role of Islamic tradition as both a stabilizing force and a vector for radicalization has been underexplored in relation to broader security reforms (Mohamed & Elmi, 2021; UNODC, 2023).

Methodologically, many previous studies have relied on either macro-level policy analysis or localized ethnographic accounts without offering a holistic framework that connects cultural practices to national security architecture. This study addresses this gap by linking Somalia's cultural foundations to its evolving security dynamics, using a multi-theoretical and context-sensitive approach. By doing so, it contributes new insights into how culturally embedded governance can either reinforce or undermine state security in fragile contexts.

Methodology

Philosophical Assumptions

This study is grounded in critical realism, which posits that reality exists independently of our perceptions, but it is only accessible through human interpretation (Bhaskar, 2010). In the context of this research, critical realism recognizes Somalia's cultural traditions such as clan structures, *xeer* (customary law), and Islamic practices as socially constructed systems with real effects on national security. While these traditions are embedded in historical and communal experience, their influence on security outcomes is mediated through human agency, interpretation, and institutional structures (Abdullahi & Ibrahim, 2022). This philosophical stance allows the study to explore the deep-rooted cultural frameworks that underpin security governance in Somalia, while acknowledging the role of actors' elders, militants, state officials, and external partners in shaping their impact (Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2023).

Research Paradigm

The study adopts a qualitative interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes understanding the subjective meanings that individuals and communities assign to their experiences and actions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretivism is appropriate for this research because it enables a contextual exploration of how Somali actors interpret the role of cultural traditions in shaping national security outcomes. Rather than seeking universal laws, the study aims to understand how different stakeholders such as clan elders, religious leaders, policymakers, and security experts perceive and negotiate the relationship between tradition and state security. This paradigm supports an in-depth examination of narratives around customary justice, religious authority, radicalization, and conflict resolution, offering insight into how meaning is constructed and contested in fragile state contexts (Mohamed & Elmi, 2021; Yusuf & Mahmoud, 2022).

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study design, focusing specifically on Somalia as a single, contextually rich unit of analysis. The case study approach is particularly appropriate for exploring issues that are deeply embedded in social, political, and cultural realities, especially when those issues require close examination of real-life processes and institutional relationships. Given the complexity of Somalia's national security landscape which is profoundly influenced by traditional governance systems, religious authority, and clan dynamics this design enables an in-depth and context-sensitive inquiry. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with

knowledgeable stakeholders, while secondary data were derived from academic journals, government publications, NGO reports, and policy briefs. This triangulation of sources strengthened the validity of the findings and allowed for a multidimensional understanding of how cultural traditions interact with formal security institutions.

Sample Size and Selection

To capture diverse insights, a purposive sampling technique was employed to identify ten key informants with expert knowledge of Somali cultural institutions and their role in national security. The participants were selected to represent a cross-section of society and institutional perspectives, ensuring a well-rounded examination of the research questions. The sample included:

- Traditional elders and xeer mediators with extensive experience in customary law and community conflict resolution;
- Islamic scholars and religious leaders involved in promoting peace and interpreting Sharia principles in Somali society;
- Senior government officials from relevant ministries, particularly those engaged in security and interior affairs, with firsthand experience of coordination challenges between state and non-state security providers;
- Regional security and governance experts affiliated with bodies such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), who offered broader geopolitical and policy insights.

Interviews were conducted either in person or through virtual platforms, depending on the accessibility and availability of the respondents. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and followed a flexible, open-ended format to encourage in-depth responses. The objective was to explore participant perspectives on how cultural traditions, including clan structures and religious values, influence both stability and conflict in Somalia's security environment.

Data Management and Analysis

To ensure data integrity and fidelity, all interviews were recorded with the participants' informed consent and later transcribed word-for-word to capture the nuances of each response. The transcripts were then subjected to thematic analysis, a qualitative method suited for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within textual data. The analysis process combined both inductive and deductive techniques. Inductively, emergent themes were drawn directly from the interview content, allowing the voices and perspectives of participants to guide interpretation. Deductively, the thematic coding was also aligned with the study's key objectives and conceptual framework, ensuring that findings were relevant to the central research questions.

From this analysis, three principal themes were developed. The first theme focused on the role of xeer and traditional law in security governance, revealing that clan elders remain pivotal actors in conflict resolution and law enforcement, particularly in rural and ungoverned areas. Their legitimacy is rooted in longstanding communal trust, compensatory justice practices, and the preservation of local order. The second theme explored the influence of religious leadership and Islamic institutions on social cohesion and ideological mobilization. While many religious leaders are peace advocates, the analysis also acknowledged instances where radical elements have exploited religious narratives to promote extremist agendas. The third theme examined the integration of customary and religious frameworks into formal state structures. Participants frequently highlighted both the benefits and tensions of harmonizing these systems, noting discrepancies in legitimacy, coordination, and policy coherence.

To enrich the analysis, secondary sources including academic journals, United Nations publications, NGO assessments, and Somali government documents were reviewed and categorized according to the same thematic structure. This process allowed for triangulation, strengthening the validity of the research findings. NVivo software was employed to manage the coding process, facilitating transparency and enabling a systematic organization of themes, sub-themes, and supporting quotes. The software also ensured that the coding process was traceable and replicable, enhancing the credibility and rigor of the analysis.

Descriptive statistics of the influence of cultural traditions on the national security of Somalia

This section presents the descriptive results on the perceived influence of cultural traditions such as clan customs, religious norms, and customary law on national security in Somalia. Data were analyzed using item mean tabulation, as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Influence of cultural traditions on national security in Somalia

Statement	Mean	SD
Traditional clan customs strongly influence conflict resolution processes in Somalia.	3.80	1.23
Cultural rituals and communal practices contribute to local peace building and reconciliation.	4.25	0.83
The application of xeer (customary law) promotes grassroots stability and order in rural communities.	4.23	0.67
Elders and religious leaders are critical actors in maintaining local security structures.	4.23	0.89
Cultural identity and clan loyalty shape public responses to national security interventions.	4.10	0.79
Some cultural practices hinder the integration of national security systems.	3.94	0.95
Resistance to central government authority is sometimes rooted in traditional beliefs.	3.80	0.93
Collaboration between security institutions and local elders strengthens conflict prevention.	4.09	0.79
Cultural norms influence perceptions of justice and the legitimacy of the state.	4.08	0.86
Respect for traditional leadership structures improves compliance with peace and security initiatives.	4.10	0.76
Average Mean	3.93	1.041

Source: Primary Data (2022)

The overall average mean score of 3.93 suggests strong agreement among respondents that cultural traditions have a notable influence on Somalia’s national security landscape. The results show a general consensus that clan systems, religious leadership, and traditional norms are central to both conflict mitigation and the shaping of responses to security policy. A high level of agreement was recorded for the statement that cultural rituals and communal practices contribute to peace building (Mean = 4.25, SD = 0.83), as well as the belief that xeer promotes grassroots stability (Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.67). Similarly, respondents emphasized the crucial role of elders and religious leaders in maintaining local security (Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.89), reflecting the widespread reliance on traditional figures for conflict resolution and order in areas underserved by state structures.

These insights were supported by qualitative interviews. One clan elder remarked: “In many communities, people still go to elders before any government office. The xeer system works because it is fast, fair, and based on mutual understanding. That’s how we’ve kept the peace for generations” (Interviewees I–III).

Participants also agreed that cultural identity and clan loyalty influence how communities respond to state interventions (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.79). Nonetheless, challenges were acknowledged, with several respondents noting that some cultural practices impede the integration of national security systems (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.95). One police officer explained:

“We often face resistance in certain areas, not because people don’t want security, but because they prefer handling issues the traditional way. It creates tension between our officers and local elders” (Interviewees IV–V).

The persistence of parallel authority structures was further highlighted by a peace building practitioner:

“Some clans operate almost independently, with their own courts, security units, and decision-making structures. The state is seen as an outsider, which complicates national-level reforms” (Interviewees VI–VII).

Despite these tensions, respondents strongly endorsed collaborative approaches. The data show broad agreement that joint efforts between state institutions and local elders enhance conflict prevention (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.79), and that cultural norms shape perceptions of justice and the legitimacy of state actors (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.86). A reconciliation officer noted:

“When government officials sit with traditional elders and agree on strategies, there is usually less violence. These elders bring calm and legitimacy that the state alone cannot offer” (Interviewees VIII–IX).

The highest mean score respect for traditional leadership improving compliance with security initiatives (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.76) further validates the importance of culturally rooted leadership in peace processes. A regional security officer commented:

“Our best successes in disarmament and reconciliation have come when elders were involved. They talk to the youth, they mediate between clans. It works better than force” (Interviewee X).

Thus, the findings emphasize that cultural traditions while not without complications remain foundational to Somalia’s security ecosystem. Traditional mechanisms offer legitimacy, local acceptance, and adaptability in fragile environments. Policymakers are therefore encouraged to formally recognize and incorporate indigenous governance systems such as xeer and clan authority structures into national security frameworks, thereby enhancing inclusivity and resilience while maintaining coherence at the state level.

Presentation of Findings

The Influence of Cultural Traditions and the National Security of Somalia

The findings of this study revealed that Somalia’s cultural traditions particularly clan structures and the customary legal system (xeer) have a profound influence on national security. The average mean of 3.93 across the Likert-scale responses suggests that participants strongly agreed on the significance of clan-based governance and customary institutions in maintaining order, resolving disputes, and shaping local security dynamics. This strong consensus underscores the continued relevance and effectiveness of traditional systems, especially in areas where formal state presence remains limited or ineffective.

Respondents affirmed that clan elders play a central role in conflict resolution, as indicated by a mean score of 3.80. The xeer system was recognized as a positive contributor to local peace with a higher mean of 4.25, and many participants noted that disputes resolved through customary mechanisms tend to be more enduring and widely accepted than those handled by formal courts, which scored a mean of 4.23. The same mean score was assigned to the idea that security decisions made at the clan level significantly affect national stability. These findings reflect the deeply ingrained trust and legitimacy that traditional governance systems hold among Somali communities, where elders and customary laws are often seen as more accessible, effective, and culturally appropriate than the formal legal system.

However, while these traditional structures provide valuable local governance, the study also highlighted their potential to undermine national cohesion and centralized authority. The existence of parallel clan-based security systems was acknowledged as a challenge to the legitimacy and effectiveness of national institutions, reflected by a mean of 4.10. This concern points to the fragmentation of the security landscape, where clan militias or locally organized enforcement structures operate independently of federal oversight. The perception that clan loyalty sometimes interferes with the enforcement of national laws was also emphasized, with a mean score of 3.94. Such loyalties can create legal inconsistencies and complicate state efforts to apply uniform security policies across regions.

Nevertheless, there was also strong support for collaboration between traditional and formal security actors. The idea that coordination between government and clan leaders improves security outcomes was widely supported, receiving a mean score of 4.10. This suggests that rather than viewing traditional systems as competitors to state authority, there is potential to integrate them constructively into national security strategies. Such integration could leverage the credibility of clan elders while ensuring alignment with broader state policies.

Thus, the study reveals that Somalia's cultural traditions play a dual role in the country's national security landscape. While they offer a strong foundation for local peace building and conflict resolution, they also pose challenges to the development of a unified, centralized security structure. These findings are consistent with previous research. Lewis (1999) noted that clan systems are deeply embedded in Somali sociopolitical life and that xeer functions effectively in the absence of formal institutions. Similarly, Menkhaus (2006) emphasized the risks of excluding traditional governance mechanisms in state-building processes, arguing that their integration is essential for any sustainable national framework. Overall, the study suggests that policies aiming to enhance security in Somalia must engage with, rather than sideline, these culturally rooted systems.

Conclusions

The study concluded that traditional clan-based governance and customary legal systems such as xeer play a critical yet complex role in shaping Somalia's national security. These systems offer local legitimacy, community trust, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly in areas underserved by formal institutions. Their presence has historically maintained peace at the grassroots level and continues to do so. However, the study also concluded that parallel systems of justice and decentralized clan militias challenge the authority of national institutions, complicating efforts to unify the country under a centralized legal and security framework. Clan loyalty often supersedes national allegiance, which hinders consistent law enforcement and undermines state legitimacy. Furthermore, findings demonstrated that collaboration between the state and

traditional leaders is essential. Building formal-informal linkages in governance and security efforts is not only beneficial it is necessary for national cohesion and long-term peace.

Recommendations

The Somali government should prioritize integrating the xeer system into formal judicial and governance structures by creating clear legal pathways for customary courts to operate alongside state institutions. Establishing liaison councils at both local and national levels comprising government officials, clan elders, and religious leaders would enhance coordination in peace building and security policy development. Additionally, public education campaigns should clarify the roles and responsibilities of customary and formal systems to reduce legal confusion and foster public trust. Disarmament and reintegration programs targeting clan militias should ensure trained individuals are integrated into national forces under a unified command. Elders and religious leaders should also be empowered as early warning agents for violence or radicalization, supported with communication tools and access to security authorities. Ultimately, sustainable peace and security in Somalia require culturally grounded, inclusive reforms that engage all stakeholders across clan lines and reflect the lived realities of Somali communities.

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