

Diaspora and Peacebuilding in Post-conflict Settings: Insights from Somaliland

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The Horn of Africa is one of the most complex and conflicted regions in the world. Countries from the Horn are experiencing processes of state collapse, state formation, and the dispersal of people. Particularly, this latest issue has captured the attention of academics and policy makers that are trying to assess the impact of diasporas activities on conflict settings within their homelands. The current literature debates on the subject focus on whether diaspora involvement exacerbate or moderate conflict dynamics. However, this dualistic paradigm is by far too simplistic and does not explain the complexity of the diasporic engagement. This paper seeks to analyze how the transnational activities of diaspora communities originating from Somaliland affect the post-conflict settings within their country of origin, by analyzing the economic, political and social dimensions of their engagement. It uses field research data as well as secondary data deriving from the literature on diasporas, conflict and peace to illustrate the complexities of diasporic involvement in the peacebuilding process. Peacebuilding is understood here as a context-related process that embraces a wide range of activities aiming at constructing a confident social environment. Thus, the concept of peacebuilding adopts different meanings depending on the specific situation to which it refers. In the Somaliland discourse, peacebuilding is seen as being closely related to development and translates into working for a democratic society built on equity and justice for all its members. Somaliland is a post-war society still characterized by the absence of strong institutions. In this context, public assets receive minimum attention from the *de facto* state. In addition, Somaliland still lacks international recognition, thus external support from governments is absent. This paper aims at assessing that, in these circumstances, diaspora's involvement in terms of economic and social remittances plays a crucial role for the reconstruction of the country. Meanwhile, as peacebuilding is intertwined with other factors such as the creation of viable political, economic and social institutions, diaspora initiatives in the education and health sectors are indirectly contributing to peace. However, diasporic initiatives may entail some controversial implications that will be also analyzed in this paper.