

Lara Aloe, Marlee Eliakim and Giacomina Romita

International Forum for Peace, Security, and Prosperity

11 March 2022

The Collaboration of Groups to Uphold Sustainable Peace

There are 191 sovereign states in the world that are members of the United Nations (United Nations: Member States). Many hope for and promote sustainable peace through their government, civilian organizations and military groups; however, that is not the case for all of the membering states. Somalia has been active with the United Nations since 1991 with the intention to help progress and advance peace and security, yet their country has had many issues with upholding and making developments with their goal; “Key challenges remain, especially in security, governance, and economic recovery” (UN Assistance Mission in Somalia). In this essay, This essay will be discussing and explaining the importance of organizations upholding peace using two case studies of Somalia and Sweden. Without peace, there would be no education, health systems and society would break down and not exist. The collaboration of the government and organizations are essential in order to uphold and have sustainable peace therefore analytical solutions are needed against the impacts of military groups using violence, promote and enforce equality and equity, as well as giving citizens the right to have free flowing information from the government and media.

According to the Borgen Project, “Somalia is a part of the poorest countries in the world with a percentage of 73% of their population in poverty” (Looking At Poverty in Somalia). Many attribute this to the increased amount of violence that happens on a daily basis in this nation. Militias have become more popular in this country and more people are joining. Many civilians join these groups because of their environment, and they are trying to argue and contest for their beliefs. To prove their points, they join as a way to give a violent

response to their government and state. In November of 2019, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia “recorded a total of 1,154 civilian casualties by mid-November. Sixty-seven percent of this figure is due to indiscriminate and targeted attacks, the majority improvised explosive devices (IEDs) attacks...” (Somalia Events of 2019). Due to all this violence, around 2.6 million people have been internally displaced and are faced with vulnerability as well as being susceptible to more abuse. Al-Shabab is a militant group that uses violence and terror to enforce their beliefs. While using these tactics, many have died due to revenge killings and explosive devices; however, the government has tried using military tactics against them. Unfortunately, the use of air strikes has also killed many innocent people. This insurgent group has reportedly been connected to 750 civilian deaths and injuries during 2019 (Somalia Events of 2019). According to a study done by the United Nations in 2018, Somalia is the country with the most child recruitments and soldiers than from any other nation in the world (Somalia Events of 2019). The Somali government is also at fault because it is known that they use unnecessary force and violence to endanger their citizens. On the other hand, there are many other countries in the world that have found solutions to help end violence in their nations. In 2018, the Swedish government hosted a summit where people can find solutions to help end violence against children (2018 Solutions Summit). According to the End Violence Against Children organization, “In February 2018, more than 400 people from over 60 countries met in Stockholm, Sweden for the first-ever End Violence Solutions Summit” (2018 Solutions Summit). The Swedish government has also tried “several crackdowns” in order to try to end gang violence and gun violence (Henley). Their interior minister, Mikael Damberg responded by saying, “Sweden must not get accustomed to this. It’s possible to reverse the trend” (Henley). There is a clear difference between the two countries and how they handle and find solutions to end violence in their respective nations.

Somalia does not allow the free flow of information, meaning that journalists and media are restricted with the things they are able to say surrounding the government of Somalia. The limitation of information being put out about the Somalian government is threatening to the Somali people. It is also dangerous for the people who are trying to get and spread information about this government. There have been reports of journalists who have been repeatedly attacked and harassed by Somalia regional authorities. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, "...eight journalists and media workers were killed and 32 injured, and 94 journalists and other media workers were arbitrarily arrested and/or subjected to prolonged detention on charges related to the exercise of freedom of expression" (Freedom of Expression in Somalia: Still not a Given). The laws that are put in place against free expression and media rights are the reason that very few people know about the issues in Somalia. Al- Shabaab is an insurgent group that has been targeting and attacking journalists that speak in the media about Somalia and its government issues. Somalia has still not recognized many of these freedoms. On the other hand, a country that does recognize these freedoms is Sweden. Sweden provides freedom of expression and also the Freedom of Press Act. This allows journalists to speak freely about Sweden and their government in the media without fear of consequences. The Sweden Sverige says, "In 1766, Sweden became the first country in the world to write freedom of the press into its constitution. The Freedom of the Press Act states that those in authority must be held accountable and all information must be freely available" (Free speech, Free Press and Overall Openness and Transparency are Key to Swedish Society, Sweden Sverige). Not having censorship and letting citizens have access to information surrounding them can be very beneficial to achieving peace.

Equality and discrimination are two very important aspects for a country to have and deal with unfortunately, Somalia has not had much success in this. According to the world

report 2021, “The UN documented over 100 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, mostly against girls” (Somalia, events of 2020). Equality is clearly something that is not focused on at all. In addition to the several claims that have been made in relation to sexual violence, there was also a report that found that two National Army officers raped a woman and a girl during the takeover of Jaaale town (Somalia Events of 2020). As a woman in Somalia who is unaware of these accusations, it is creating a false reality in which they are living. Somalia needs to own up and take responsibility for what they are doing to these women and acknowledge the discriminatory policies that are being put in place with no consequence. Additionally, August of 2020 Somaliland approved of the “Rape and Fornication Bill”, which allows for a child and forced marriages, criminalizes witchcraft and “false reporting of rape” (Somalia Events of 2020). On top of these laws being passed the Somalian government has also allowed for the death penalty to be put in place for same-sex sexual relations and also includes an unacceptable definition of what rape can be which also excludes the possibility of rape in a marriage that doesn’t take into account consent (Somalia Events of 2020). This just goes to show that equality is not something that Somalia takes very seriously; it is simply just a word that is passed around within the government and people who don’t understand the meaning.

Alternatively, Sweden is one of the few countries that has been a strong promoter of equality, “Sweden’s government has declared itself a feminist government, and the country has a law against gender discrimination” (Equal power and influence for women and men -that’s what Sweden is aiming for). For several years this country has been a big supporter of gender equality in all ways, “Gender equality implies not only equal distribution between men and women in all domains of society. It is also about the qualitative aspects ensuring that the knowledge and experience of both men and women are used to promote progress in all aspects of society” (Equal power and influence for women and men -that’s what Sweden is

aiming for). Here is the idea that in all aspects throughout society men and women are being treated and respected equally . Rather it be in the workforce or politics men and women in Sweden are seen as equal individual, and there is no question of discrimination being asked . This just goes to show that Somalia needs to learn and take some notes on what Sweden has been doing for such a long time now.

To conclude, without peace a country is not able to develop in a desirable manner. There would be no proper education or healthcare systems. Government intervention is key to uphold sustainable peace in a country. Making laws that will bring peace to society, controlling military groups, promoting equality and stopping violence, are just some steps the government should take. The right to free expression and the flow of information is also an important factor in creating peace in a country. Somalia may not hold true to all of these requirements, but there are countries such as Sweden to take as an example and potentially follow their lead.

Works Cited

ECONOMIC Value of Peace 2021 - Economicsandpeace.org. www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EVP-2021-web-1.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Examining Extremism: Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujahideen (Al Shabaab).” Examining Extremism: Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujahideen (Al Shabaab) | Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 Oct. 2021, www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-harakat-al-shabaab-al-mujahideen-al-shabaab. Accessed February 24, 2022.

Felbab-Brown, Vanda. “The Problem with Militias in Somalia: Almost Everyone Wants Them despite Their Dangers.” Brookings, 15 Apr. 2020, www.brookings.edu/research/the-problem-with-militias-in-somalia-almost-everyone-wants-them-despite-their-dangers/. Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Freedom of Expression in Somalia: Still Not a Given.” UNSOM, 25 Apr. 2021, unsom.unmissions.org/freedom-expression-somalia-still-not-given. Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Gender Gap Assessment.” Oxfam in Horn, East and Central Africa, heca.oxfam.org/latest/policy-paper/gender-gap-assessment. Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Openness in Sweden.” Sweden.se, 3 Nov. 2021, sweden.se/life/democracy/openness-in-sweden. Accessed February 24, 2022.

Philipp, Jennifer, et al. “Poverty in Somalia.” The Borgen Project, Jennifer Philipp https://borgenproject.org/wp-content/uploads/The_Borgen_Project_Logo_small.jpg, 3 Aug. 2020, borgenproject.org/tag/poverty-in-somalia/. Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Sweden: End Violence.” End Violence Against Children,

www.end-violence.org/impact/countries/sweden#action. Accessed February 24,2022.

“Sweden and Gender Equality.” Sweden.se, 18 Feb. 2022,

sweden.se/life/equality/gender-equality. Accessed February 24,2022.

“Sweden's Gun Violence Rate Has Soared Due to Gangs, Report Says.” The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 26 May

2021,[www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/26/fatal-shootings-have-risen-in](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/26/fatal-shootings-have-risen-in-sweden-despite-fall-across-europe-report-finds)

[-sweden-despite-fall-across-europe-report-finds](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/26/fatal-shootings-have-risen-in-sweden-despite-fall-across-europe-report-finds). Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Targeted Suicide Bombing Kills Leading Somali Journalist, Badly Injures Another:

Reporters without Borders.” RSF, 22 Nov. 2021,

[rsf.org/en/news/targeted-suicide-bombing-kills-leading-somali-](http://rsf.org/en/news/targeted-suicide-bombing-kills-leading-somali-journalist-badly-injures-another)

[journalist-badly-injures-another](http://rsf.org/en/news/targeted-suicide-bombing-kills-leading-somali-journalist-badly-injures-another). Accessed February 24, 2022.

“Unsom | Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.” United Nations, United Nations,

dppa.un.org/en/mission/unsom. Accessed February 24, 2022.

World Bank Group. “Combating Corruption.” World Bank, World Bank Group, 19 Oct. 2021,

www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption. Accessed February

24,2022.

“World Report 2020: Rights Trends in Somalia.” Human Rights Watch, 15 Jan. 2020,

www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/somalia. Accessed February

24,2022.

“World Report 2021: Rights Trends in Somalia.” Human Rights Watch, 13 Jan. 2021,

www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/somalia. Accessed February

24,2022.

