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Abstract

The civil war in Somalia in 1991, has affected everyone negatively. However, it has also transformed peoples’ capacities positively which is the case for Somali women who considered that era of their lives as an opportunity that should be seized to review and restructure their own new and well-deserved identity as women and recognise their capacities. For the first time, they got the chance to gain power and exercise authority over their own agency and refused to return back to the status quo before the war. Employing an analytical study, this paper illustrates how Somali women managed to combat violence through identifying new and unique approaches for women empowerment after the civil war of 1991. It also addresses the importance of their involvement in peacebuilding process in South Somalia. Finally, the paper concludes by addressing some of the challenges that were faced and still facing them that need to be avoided and resolved in order to enable them to be real agents of peace in the peacebuilding process in Somali

Key Words:

South Somalia, Empowerment, Women Empowerment, Peacebuilding, Gender.

For Ahmed Ismail and Busad Guled, Thank you!
**Acronyms:**

**ACHPR:** African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

**CEDAW:** Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

**CSOs:** Civil Society Organisations.

**ICESCR:** International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

**ICCPR:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

**SCC:** Sixth Clan Coalition.

**SRC:** Supreme Revolutionary Council.

**SSWC:** Save Somali Women and Children.

**SYL:** Somali Youth League.

**SYC:** Somali Youth Club.

**TFG:** Transitional Federal Government.

**UNICEF:** The United Nations Children's Fund.

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme.

**UNSCR:** United Nations Security Council Resolution.

**WCPU:** Women Civilian Protection Unit.
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I. Introduction

There has only ever been one story told about Somalia. This story only covered and produced images of tragedy, destruction, rape and starvation which were the result of an excruciating civil war that lasted for 20 years. This civil war in Somalia has ruled on everything and everybody. Everyone became a victim and perpetrator at some point. This single story of a crashed country has eliminated any past prosperity of its people who enjoyed relative freedom and power before the war.

There has been no effective central government for almost 20 years. Tribal militarized conflicts started and young armed men emerged (in Refworld: Somalia 1994a: Hoehne & Luling 2010: Latin & Samatar 1987). This state of chaos exposed everyone’s life to danger. Somali men, who, before the war, were the sole breadwinners for their families, became jobless. Others went to the field to fight or just ran away and never came back. Somali women, instinctively, had to step forward and take the lead in order to support their families. Many women admitted that during those bloody years¹ of killing and displacement they were subject to domestic and external violence and persecution ranging from rape and kidnapping to forced marriage from both sides.

But at the same time, the events in Somalia witnessed the courage of the women who took their chances to resist the violence and the general state of impunity. After years of the conflict, they decided to climb the hard way. No matter how in danger their lives could be they decided to be side by side with their sisters and rebuild peace with whatever power they gained before the government collapsed. Many of them have used their capacities and power to mobilise themselves, confront and stop the violence that was threatening them as women, their homes and communities (ibid: Refworld: Somalia 1994b: Ingiriis & Hoehne 2013).

This research analyses the evolution of women’s role in Somalia and more specifically in the Southern of Somalia the importance of their empowerment in peacebuilding processes. It is necessary to begin with some clarification about some characteristics of women in Somali

¹Like many politicians, Jeffrey Gettleman in his article ‘The Most Dangerous Place in the World’ has described the period between 1991 till 2006 as ‘Bloody Years’ where a state of chaos and lawlessness mainly the situation in Mogadishu. After ousting Siad Barre in 1991, tribes turned their arms and grudges against each other. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/02/16/the_most_dangerous_place_in_the_world?page=0,2&wp_login_redirect=0
society. Like in any other part of the world, Somali women don’t form a homogeneous entity, which means, there are ethnic, geographical origins, social class and educational differences. As a patriarchal and paternal society, it is a matter of belonging to something and someone. First, they belong to their fathers’ clan and when they are married off, they will be referred to someone who is originally from X clan and who is now married to someone from Y clan. So, unlike men, they do not have clear-cut exclusive identity (Gardner & El Bushra 2004, 167). Their individualism as members is not acknowledged. Ideologies such ‘superiority’ and ‘inferiority’ based on gender and clan are combined and still inherited in the minds of Somalis, men or women.

On a community level, from the beginning they are expected to provide required labour, mainly in pastoral activities, to guarantee the survival of their families. Thus, they are unable to first get proper education and participate in official decision-making not because they are not clever enough or do not have the wit to do so, but simply because it is a task expected of men (Warsame 2001). Nevertheless, the situation is even more pronounced when a woman belongs to a minority clan. Women’s membership to one of the majority or minority clan- families of the society could be a measurement of her social status and how well-off she might be. Those who belong to minority clans lack the protection from their clans as these clans themselves are considered low-caste and vulnerable among others.

The goal of this paper is to show the correlation between women empowerment and peacebuilding and the importance of one component to the other. Findings from the literature review showed how Somali women through small communities' participation and bigger Somali women civil society organizations' initiatives highlighted the necessity for women to be included in building peace in Somali. Accordingly placed these concepts in the service to do so and change their status and guarantee more rights for the rest of women in Somalia. At the early stages of the conflict in Somalia, international community’s initiatives for reconciliation and peace-building bypassed women organisations and civil societies. They only included men

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2 Most of minority clans were defined as those who belong to non-Somali ethnicities. According to UK Boarder Agency, Somali COI report Jan 2012; stated that ‘Minority groups had no armed militias and continued to be disproportionately subject to killings, torture, rape, kidnapping for ransom...’

3 The “international community” in the context of this paper includes international donors, governments, political or diplomatic mediations and the UN.
whether they were warlords, tribesmen and few political elites in these roundtables therefore falling into the social structure of a system that persecuted women. Internally, some national peace negotiations and meetings continued to be held publically, mainly where Qat was distributed. So, when these meetings were taking place between warring clans excluded women as long as they are male representative from their clans. Such places are strictly for men who came to chew Qat and in case women are there then it will be for the sake of selling it (Dini: 2010, Fleshman 2004: 15). Gradually, this has inspired the Somali government as well as the international community to take serious consideration in boosting the role of women and empowering them to be more involved in actual peacebuilding, specifically in Southern Somalia.

This paper is structured as follows. First, I will present the political, legal and other social situation of women before the conflict in order to demonstrate the importance of peace-building alongside women presence in ever process of healing the society. Afterwards, I will discuss the deterioration that happened in women’s status during the civil war in general and how the state of instability and non-existence of central government contributed to chaos state that has its toll severely on women. That will include the nature of their contribution in that process before the civil war 1991 and what coping mechanism they acquired to overcome some culturally inherited challenges. This discussion will consequently bring us to the civil war vicious circle where women left bare-chest in the middle of the conflict to kidnapping, rape and other inhumane treatment. The second part will present the definitions and origins of both women empowerment and peace-building. In this regard, I will examine the evolution of the role of women empowerment in the peace-building process in the south of Somalia since the early times of the conflict of Somalia till now. A literature review that has been undertaken in regard to this topic under that period has showed that there was, to some extent, invisibility or unacceptance of women presence in decisions-making field. That section will illustrate how different women empowerment initiative from Somali women associations deservedly established a place for women to be effective partners in peacebuilding. I will also shed the light on the some UN resolution in asserting the important role that women have in peacebuilding globally and in southern of Somalia specifically. Finally, some of the main challenges will be discussed based on the final findings of the study.
II. Contextualisation: Women status after independence 1961

To appreciate Somali’s women role in bringing peace in south Somalia, it is necessary to investigate the different aspects of their participation in decisions-making and peacebuilding in the country after independence in 1961. Their status in Somalia went through many ups and downs. In various literatures, women had played strategic role before, during and after independence (UNDP Human Development report 1998, Fitzgerald 2002, Aidid 2010, Jama 2010). Politically active, they were an important backbone in creating Somali Youth League (SYL), one of the two important political bodies in Somalia back then. They contributed enormously in many ways, for example, by selling what they owned such as clothes and jewelleries or by providing a safe shelter for those who were wanted by colonial powers. They were simply as efficient as men and abided to the SYL’s principles and goals. However, unfortunately, little literature was devoted to document more about their achievement during that era compared to that of their male counterparts. Once the country gained independence, women were totally forgotten. In the Somali Peace Conference that was held in Paris in 1995, Ladan Affi stated in her essay how disappointing it was for all those women not to have women’s representation in the Cabinet or the Parliament. They did not benefit as much from independence and from the new Somali government as they were hoping. Any benefits to be part of rebuilding new Somalia required a lot such as education. Most women didn’t advance in their education for either social and/or domestic reasons. Getting an advance in education was considered bad investment of time and energy. Therefore, those who were slightly supporting the idea of education would send their daughters to Quraan schools and that was supposed to be enough. Women were not allowed to get advanced in the society where patriarchy and clan lineage were the only form of order up to this day. Men were only able to enjoy employment because of the

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4 SYL is known to be the first political party in Somalia. It played a key role in Somali’s road to independence from 1950s and 1960s. It was founded by thirteen members who were pictures of unity, refusing to divulge their clans’ affiliations, thus uniting Somalia North and South, after their independence from the British and the Italians. The other one was Somali National League (SNL). Please read ‘Haweenku Wa Garab (Women are a Force): Women and the Somali Nationalist Movement, 1943–1960, P116’ by Safia Aidid.

5 Refer to the annex N°.1.

6 In what considered to be the most comprehensive analysis of nationalism in the history of Somalia, Saadia Touval’s ‘Somalia Nationalism’, she states in her writing that there was no reference to the Somali women contribution in Nationalist movements, not even a secondary one. When elderly were asked to describe women’s participation in the Somali resistance nationalist movements in the SYL, one old woman answered “Who built?”

7 Arraweelo: A Role Model For Somali Women.
education they managed to gain which was another factor to achieve both prestige and superiority over women.

Coming sections will shed light on Somali women's situation during Siad Barre's regime. It will present as well what kind of changes occurred after the eruption of civil war in 1991s.

i. Siad Barra’s era for women
When Siad Barre came to power in October 1969, it was claimed that women status witnessed relatively positive changes (Samatar 1988). Life started to brighten up for women and they were able to access to higher education and later participated in some governmental positions. To start with, Barre declared the establishment of the Somali Women’s Democratic Organisation (SWDO) in 1971 that was more concentrated on raising awareness and mobilisation among Somali women (Ingiriis & Hoehne 2013a, 317).

Nevertheless, looking back at the era before his presidency, Somalia’s legal system was derived from colonial powers and Islamic legal traditions. But once the country achieved independence and both Somalis, British Somaliland and the Italian Somaliland, united, the new Somali Republic found itself in front of a new task to unify its legal status. Later on, Barre took steps to modernise the civil law and make it compatible with his socialist vision for Somalia believing that both traditional and Islamic laws were outdated (Abdullahi 2009). That visionary future included boosting women status in the country and as a result the ‘Family law’ was introduced in January 1975 which came into force in 1987, as a new branch of the civil law of Somalia that was established under a direct order from the head of the government and was executed by the ministry of justice. The law mainly articulated women’s equal rights and entitlements in marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody. For example, marriage was defined in the family law as ‘”contract between man and woman who are equal in rights and duties; its basis are mutual understanding and respect...”’ (In Ingiriis & Hoehne 2013b, 317) which was an unusual understanding of the traditional sense of marriage in the country. In addition, the law enabled women to work and enter everywhere in public workplaces holding junior and senior positions in the government. It stated that men and women are equal and have the same rights and obligation in front of law and towards their society (Hoehne & Luling 2010, 137).

Refer to the annex about the political history of Somalia to understand more about Siad Barre’s era of ruling Somalia for 21 years.
promising move was an attempt to reduce gender, social, and political inequalities and advance the role of women in society. Nevertheless, that brought up different interpretations by some scholars about the new law.

For example, from an anthropological point of view, I.M. Lewis described the law as being a merely tokenistic and symbolic step that made little serious achievement in their lives (1994, 212) and in return made some sort of bloody progression especially after the public execution of ten religious scholars who opposed the law on Islamic grounds (1980, 213). Others scholars highlighted how family law did not practically apply most of its provisions such as education rights and how even after the introduction of the law and 8 years of compulsory education, literacy among girls was estimated to be 39 per cent of boys’ literacy (ibid: refworld 1994, Laitin and Samatar 1987, 87). They even went further and attributed that the introduction of the new law was only an attempt to shake the society that was mainly composed of elderly and lineage structure. While other scholars such as Ahmed Samatar praised the socialist military government achievements and policies under women’s rights. He also described the family law in 1975 as another victory and ‘another important progressive step’ (ibid: 1988, 107). To understand better the situation and changes that occurred in women’s rights after 1991, I am presenting below an overview of how things were before the outbreak of the civil war.

a) Legal Rights and Women
It is worth mentioning that, according to reviewed sources, although Somalia was, and is still, not a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However it is a signatory of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1990, as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) (ibid: refworld: Somalia 1994). It is worth noting that when a state is only a signatory for an international law is not legally binding as ratifying it. In other words, only for a state to sign a convention doesn’t necessary have the same potential and required impact to be applicable on a national level.

In his book, Samatar stated that “women's rights have received more attention under the military regime than at any other time in modern Somali history” (Samatar 1988, 106). Regardless of the bad reputation of military era from 1970s to 1980s or the real political intentions behind adopting the ‘Family Law’, Samatar is calling to admit the legal reformations that the Family Law had
brought into the lives of the Somali women. Nevertheless, a number of obstacles were faced in the implementation of the Family Law. However, the overall legal structure continued to be intertwined with lineage, culture and Sharia law. When Family Law tried to ensure equal rights for women in several matters such as divorce, due to society unacceptability, they were still, for example, unable to file a divorce case against their husbands without his approval. In another instance, the law had managed to guarantee for mothers to seek custody of their children after divorce which, had previously been automatically granted to the fathers of boys over the age of two and girls over the age of seven.

However, the family law found some difficulty at some stages to take a path that opposed with the sharia law. For example, it could not guarantee equal inheritance share between men and women which contradicted, again, in some provisions the Sharia Law. So, women kept inheriting half of what men inherit. Of course, there are exceptions where some clans accepted women’s sharing equal inheritance with men (Lewis 1969, 128). So, we should remember that as it gained many supporters among the Somalis, especially women; ‘Family Law’ also had a relatively high percentage of opponents in a country where Islam is practiced by 98% of the population. Religious groups rejected the ‘family law’ and Barre’s intention to secularise the country. They also rejected the law on the basis that it contained some sort of western ideas, especially the idea of equality between men and women in civil and family matter. They claimed that law’s provisions were incompatible with Sharia law and the Islamic structure of the society especially when the law expanded grounds for women to have their say when it comes to marriage, divorce and child custody (op.cit; Laitin and Samatar 1987, 24).

Finally, after reviewing the history of the Family Law and its impact on women it became evident that it had, to some level, a negative impact on women’s lives. First of all, whether the law had supporters of opponents, both sides were only representing the patriarchal society and

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9 Sharia law is a sole understanding of Islamic law based on the Koran and the teachings of Mohammed as interpreted and applied over the years by scholars and jurists (Higgins, P.J. 1985). However, Dr. Ken Menkhaus describes how Somalis see and understand Sharia teachings. He highlights the fact that Somalis in nature are not conservative individuals. For Somalis, Islam, as he describes it, is simply a veil lightly worn. Therefore, they haven’t been strict about applying its law and manners. For example, Somali women were traditionally veiled. So, others preferred applying other clan traditional, customary law and civil law. These laws superseded Islamic or Sharia law in the country. Menkhaus states that these Sharia law applications and understanding were merely reviewed as imposed laws from Gulf States and especially through Somali young men and women who immigrated to these states for work opportunities or to learn more about Islam (Political Islam in Somalia, Ken Menkhaus, Middle East Policy, Vol. IX, No. 1, March 2002).
their victims were women. They suffered the most after the adoption of the law. Hoehne and Luling described that women were subject to various sufferings ‘‘In particular, polygamy, divorce and family violence drastically increased, and social problems were augmented’’ (2010, 154). There was disconnection between the reasons why the law was adopted in the first place and how it was perceived by the population. Even the governmental law enforcement instruments and institutions didn’t take proper measures to follow its implementation which contributed to the fractions that led to the country’s collapse (ibid: Hoehne & Luling, 2010).

b) Political Rights and the position of women
At the beginning of his reign, Siad Barre’s government managed to achieve a cohesive way of running the country. Nevertheless, the Somali democratic constitution 1960 showed that it was somewhat gendered \(^\text{10}\). Although women were able to take part in the political field like any other citizen; due to the complexity of traditional structure of the country there were a few red lines that they were not able to challenge. If we take the constitution for example, there was no single article or provision stating that women can’t be president or even run for presidential elections. However Article 71, paragraph 2 states that whoever is running for presidential elections should not be married to a woman who is not from a Somali origin and that strictly implies men\(^\text{11}\).

Politics continued to be that favourite space where Somalis voiced their future prospective and women were not any different, even in 1979, probably after the introduction of the ‘‘Family Law’’ and the general resentment among religious scholars, when Barre announced the establishment of one socialist political party which officially meant banning any other political parties in his era. Many criticised how real women participation in politics was and even claimed that their political rights were gradually shrinking only to those whom their clans were loyal to his government (Kapteijns, 1994). As mentioned earlier, they were unable to take part in any real decision-making meetings and as a result that created a gap between what was actually stated for women as a right and the application of these rights. Whether it was a tribal or section assembly of elders, the culture of some clans was in principle against the idea of being

\(^{10}\) Gender is an important concept for this study however it will be discussed in the second part of the conceptual framework.

\(^{11}\) Title II “ The President of the Republic”, article 71 “Qualification of Eligibility” para 2 “ The President of the Republic shall not have been married to, nor shall he marry during his term of office, any woman who is not an original citizen”
represented by a woman as the whole structure of this council of elders was composed of men (op.cit; Lewis 1969, p 128). As a result, their possibility to have a real contribution in holding senior political positions in the government had gradually vanished.

A report from the UNDP in 1990 discussed that at some point women’s representation rate in the Somali parliament was 4% of the male rate. This decreased to almost 0% in 1992 (op.cit; Refworld 1994). It is worth noting that in the area of voting, for example, it had varied historically among the southern part of the country, which got to vote in 1958 while in the north women participation in voting was for the first time in 1961 (ibid.; Refworld: Somalia 1994, UNICEF 2002).

To sum up, I must say that this was not unusual there especially when the whole complex of Somali society believed in sayings such as "Woman is a poor thing. She understands nothing" (Lewis 1969, 129). These gaps made it difficult to achieve a complete victory when the environment as a whole was infiltrated with clanism, backward ideologies, gender inequalities and misinterpretation of Islam. Despite this, "Family Law" for most Somalis, especially women, was the beginning of a bright future even if most of its provisions didn’t come to enforcement.

**ii. Somali Women after 1991**

January 1991 marked the date when the international community announced the ending of Siad Barre’s dictatorship era. Chaos and suffering witnessed everywhere and, as elsewhere, the civil war had its impact on all Somali citizens. With no real central government, radical groups, warlords and clan system of governments appeared to run the country and vulnerable groups (women, children, elders and those who belong to minority clans) suffered disproportionately.

In this section, I will not talk about the overall destruction that Somalia suffered but will solely and briefly talk about women’s situation during the post-Barre era. Women were subject to a tremendous amount of violence based on their gender. In 2011, a field study that was undertaken by TrustLaw had showed that even after a decade of the war in Somalia, the country is still listed as the fifth worst and most dangerous place in the world to be a woman in (TrustLaw 2011)12. Many of the extremist groups that emerged following the collapse had revived an extreme

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12 TrustLaw asked more than 200 gender experts to pick the world’s most dangerous countries for women. Somalia trailed behind Afghanistan, Congo, Pakistan and India. ([www.trust.org/trustlaw](http://www.trust.org/trustlaw))
clanism and wrong practices of Sharia law that had a negative impact on women’s rights (in refworld 1994).

Studying the anthropological structure of Somalia and the war impact on the citizens, the collapse of the state and the dysfunction of all government’s administrates had produced an unemployed male population. It was, and still is, unacceptable for them to stay at home without anything to do or to cook and look after their children. That situation was difficult for both men and women but it was more difficult for women. They had to see their men who had escaped the killing and maiming, losing their minds due to the horrific situation or to a lesser cause which was the addiction to the Qat. Women stepped in and went out to work either in markets or others’ houses in order to support their families. They became the primary breadwinner for their families. Power inside family changed and women, somehow, were the power (Ingiriis & Hoehne, 2013).

Moreover, when they found themselves able to take roles and make decisions that men ceased to keep or make it by themselves alone, even if these decisions were on the household level, women started to be more ambitious and determined to be more visible and active in other decision-making and political spheres.

Where few political rights for women were already confiscated before the war; however, it worsened during and after the war. As the political powers and mechanism in Somalia asserted the roots of the clans and lineage system of sovereignty, women lost the glimpse of hope they thought they would have enjoyed even if Barre was ousted. They didn’t have a distinct clan affiliation (see supra) but that didn’t guarantee their safety from some clan-related assaults. Men were the only righteous individuals who were entitled to participate in political talks and peace negotiations in Somali in the years that followed the eruption of the conflict (op.cit: TrustLaw 2011) and as a result that widened pre-existent gender gaps. Moreover, as there was no central government, head of clans were the government, were the power. Not because they necessarily knew much about politics but merely because they earned that right due to their gender. These twisted and biased ideologies against women had made their contribution and initiatives to pass unrecognised by their male-counterparts.
Legally, in her words, Dr. Safia Shire\textsuperscript{13} described the war and its impact on women by saying ‘\textit{when the slow disintegration of [Somali] society and institutions as well as the destruction and violence started, the rights of Somali women began eroding, and they became a voiceless group}’ (in refworld 1994: Shire 1993). The absence of a legitimate central government had contributed to the loss of legal rights for women and their destiny for protection fell back on the shoulder of warlords and clans leaders. As a weapon of war, women became subject to systematic attack and rape from warring clans, Al-Shabaab militia and sometimes from Somali government forces.

As Sadia Ahmed presented in her article, women were, sometimes, subject to dual discrimination. On one hand, it was the paternal society’s oppression that kept subordinating them. However, on another hand, it was combined with extremists’ continuous application of their own understanding and interpretation of Islam and Sharia law knowing that women had minimal, or no knowledge about Islam (1998). With no actual and effective legal mechanism, women situation and legal rights continued to worsen.

To start with the emergence of those radical Islamist groups, especially in the southern part of Somalia, had immensely contributed to women discrimination. They were applying traditional laws that gave superiority to lineage, clan powers and biased understanding about religion to persecute women and cripple their right for justice and reparation. Under that state of impunity, they were unable to report, as the judicial system as a whole was not functioning. Even if they sought legal remedies they were subject to stigmatisation, force marriage to their rapists and even killings in some cases (New York Times, Gettleman, 2011). The ‘\textit{Family law}’ that was once the biggest achievement of Barre’s government as it was believed that it secured women’s rights, ceased to function and apply during the war. Recently on the other hand, some government forces were attacking and raping women especially internally displaced persons, IDPs, in the camps of Mogadishu. Aljazeera reported earlier this year how some rape incidents that involved some government soldiers were not taken seriously by the whole government structure and instead resulted in arresting the victim (Aljazeera, 2013). In her visit to Somalia in April 2013, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary- General (SRSG) on sexual violence in conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, expressed her worries and concern over the escalating cases of

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{13} Dr. Safia Shire was a former diplomat for Barre’s government in the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
\end{quote}
rape that had been taking place in some of Mogadishu’s IDPs camps against women. She also stated how almost more than 1,700 rape cases took place last year and many weren’t reported (Genocide watch 2013).

These sittings and groups have imposed some discriminatory laws that undermined women’s ability to challenge some extreme legal breaches that were threatening their freedom and entity. As the social structure of the country continued to be patriarchal, it subordinated women and didn’t allow them to enjoy the same rights equally to men. In addition, due to the lack of awareness about their legal rights, various human rights violations against women were committed and rarely reported or documented.

In conclusion, previous sections intended to shed light on the overall civil, legal and political situations of Somali women before and during the civil war. Historically speaking, their roles and situations went through many ups and down in these arenas. Therefore, it is necessary to link these facts and study how it can be linked and used to empower women so they can be effective agents of peacebuilding.

**III. Conceptual Framework**

As one of the central points of this paper is empowerment, it is very important and essential to study the different definitions that were discussed by prominent scholars, experts, practitioners as well as agencies. However, before we go into depth in discussing empowerment, I see that it is not possible to do so without a reference to Michel Foucault concept of "Power".

**i. Definition of Power:**

In the first chapter of her book, Elisheva Sadan presents how Foucault\(^{14}\) was one of those scholars who introduced a different new understanding of power. She states how his writings moved the concept from being solely attached to negative act of action where powerful individuals, represented mostly in the government and the State, exercise unlawful discriminatory and oppression acts on the citizens who don’t possess that power, in other words who are powerless (2004a). In the translated version of Foucault’s book ‘*Histoire de la sexualité 1976*’\(^{15}\), he came with this fascinating definition and description to some characteristics of

\(^{14}\) I would like to draw the attention of the readers that I relied mostly on other scholars’ studies in reviewing some of Foucault’s writings about power and types of power as well.

\(^{15}\) Translated by Robert Hurley 1978 ” The History of Sexuality” Vol. I.
power that matches these of empowerment. His book stated that it is unlikely to say that power is only a top-down way but it is also a bottom-up process in order to be labelled as a "power". The power relations can’t be reduced to only oppressor and oppressed but it has more productive relations especially when some sort of resistance is involved, as Foucault believes that ‘’where is power, there will be resistance’’ and that resistance is what creates the productive relations (Hurley 1978). Again, this brings us to understand that power is entrenched in the society and exercised by everyone. This means that it might extend to regulate power relation in micro levels such as employers’ power over their employees, teachers’ control over their students and parents over their children. He has also called to view power as mutual relationship that has two sides, a producer and a receiver, a taker and a giver which differs from the traditional understanding of power as an ‘’abstract thing’’.

A review of some of Foucault’s translated writings showed that he discussed different types of power. One of the most important types of power, according to Foucault’s writings, is the ‘Power/Knowledge’ where he believes that any knowledge derived from previous scientific judgement and analysis is used and fed back to reinforce exercises of power through laws and regulations that will create some sort of normality and order in the society and supervise citizens not to stray away from these laws (ibid: Sadan 2004b, 55-56). The second type of power is ‘’Disciplinary Power’’. About this type, Sadan explained how Foucault in his book ‘’Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975)’’ thinks that this type of power is more entrenched in government systems and military industry. He gave examples how disciplinary observation was used on prisoners through putting them under close surveillance as a method to control their movements and behaviour and eventually produce disciplined individuals. In the prison scenario, Foucault explains the transition from torture to laws, from physical punishment to psychological punishment of both the soul and will. In summary, disciplinary power is replacing other humiliating ways of punishment and torture to relatively more positive and humane power. (ibid: Sadan 2004c, 56). Third type which is called ‘’Sovereign Power’’ is very interesting through the lenses of Foucault’s writings. Foucault’s sovereign power is to bid obedience to the laws of the king or higher authoritarian figures. One of its main advantages is the right to decide life and death which means this authoritarian power is usually in the hands of the king or the president who would impose some powers and commands on their army and soldiers under the name of

16 To be more specific refer to his book “Histoire de la sexualité 1976”
protecting the sovereignty of the state and whom in case they defy these orders would be punished by death. It is worth mentioning that this type is actually as old as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and it was gradually replaced with disciplinary power (ibid: Hurley 1978b, 135,136).

To sum up what has been discussed above, we can say that power could also be empowerment as well but with a slight semantic difference. They both have some similarities however, empowerment may carry an added value of power that we can discuss it more in the coming sections.

ii. Empowerment: An Integrated Concept.
Since 1970s, many theories and definitions that discuss empowerment had emerged. These theories were not tackling specifically one type of literature but it touched upon various literatures. From psychological literature to social science and from sociology to education researches (Perkins & Zimmerman 1995). However, empowerment as a concept had become an important discourse in the development of individuals, communities and organisations (Zimmerman, in press). Rappaport, for instance, defines empowerment as being our humane desire to positively change and boost something in our life which we either need or we simply believe is our right to acquire it. He acknowledges the fact that empowerment could be either a ‘‘need-oriented’’ or a ‘‘right-oriented’’ concept (1981a). As he approaches it as a right-oriented method for individuals, he expresses his rejection to some kinds of empowerment that opts to treat individuals as helpless children or blocks of institution and organisations that don’t have control over their lives and opportunities. He believes that including individuals in addressing a matter that affects their lives, for example, do not necessarily mean complicating it. On the contrary, it simply rejects what he calls it a ‘‘one-sided’’ view and, in return, brings in a sense of ‘‘ownership’’ and diverse solutions (ibid).

On another hand, Cornell Empowerment Group chooses to view empowerment as a spontaneous process that emerges from local communities’ wish to have control over their lives, which means their intention to bring a positive change, and have access to resources. From this perspective, the methodology to achieve an independent empowerment is through ‘‘group-participation’’ (in Rappaport 1995, 802; Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989).
While others prefer to describe empowerment as a ‘participatory approach’, where empowerment outcomes and processes are both included, Rappaport highlights that ‘bottom-up’ empowerment is, in other words, a form of participatory approach where individuals are consulted and included in planning, developing and implementing programmes that will effect and have an impact on their lives (ibid: 1981b, 17).

From a completely different perspective, Sarah White shares her trust on the ‘top-down’ empowerment when two parties are ‘mutually’ empowering each other. The motivations of some NGOs in providing means of empowerment to disadvantaged communities, out of solidarity or purposely, are either because 1) they are unable to identify how to empower themselves without external actors 2) they do not have control over their choices 3) there is a lack of resources or they don’t have access to them in order to be self-sufficient and empowered. Based on what presented in her study, this type of empowerment was criticised as one of the immediate interest of some NGOs is to have access to funding through creating empowerment projects for the disempowered ones (1996). Then, we have an accountability issue as they are more concerned about their donors more than their beneficiaries in order to be funded. This goes on the opposite line with the traditional vision of empowerment that has always been understood as an agenda that was born from below and gradually transcends to the top.

Zimmerman combined his definition of empowerment to what has been asserted above. He adds that there are different levels of empowerment and they are interconnected. Hence, in order to achieve an empowered community then people’s needs should first be addressed and members of small communities such as women societies, youth clubs and trade unions should also be included in the process. Whereas empowered organisations should take into account practices and programmes that can develop individuals’ skills and promote their capacities (1995a).

More recent literature viewed empowerment as a self-centred process that should produce group-benefit results, encourage any attempts to remove top-down exclusionary policies and institutional barriers that might dismiss any members or groups in the society during decision-making processes. Furthermore, it brings together bottom-up communities’ activities and initiatives that will participate in empowering individuals and communities socially, politically and economically (in UNDP report, Somalia 2012). Although Naila Kebeer has agreed with the overall definitions of empowerment that are presented above, she adds that her understanding of
empowerment is paradoxically the existence of disempowerment. In other words, a great deal of her definition about empowerment tackles the freedom to choose and those who have the freedom to choose and the ability to exercise their choices are not disempowered and don’t need to be empowered. She explains that unless someone is lacking or doesn’t have the ability to choose, any process follows to acquire that missing ability is ‘empowerment’. (1999a).

For me and for the purpose of this paper, I will try to show how some aspects of empowerment that has been highlighted by all these sources above are actually, regardless of some slight differences, similar. These two angles of empowerment are complementing each other from my point of view. While Zimmerman is stressing on the necessity of any empowerment processes and programmes to tackle all segments of society; the more obscure it is the better it needs empowerment (op.cit: 1995b), Kabeer, on the hand, is highlighting the importance to understand that only those who lack the ability to choose, who don’t have access or control over their choices and resources; those individuals are in need to be empowered (1999b).

iii. Linkage between Gender and Women Empowerment

Women empowerment and development approaches worked side by side both in humanitarian and development stages to tackle gender inequality issues by working directly with women. This resulted in the allocation and channelling of resources to them in order to support their engagement in equality for themselves. As mentioned earlier, calls for gender equality were developed from the belief that women were facing mainstreamed gender inequalities and in that sense they were relatively disadvantaged from some rights situated to men. They were perceived weak and vulnerable in our societies. In workplaces, they normally receive lower pay sometimes for the same job or similar work that men do. In some situations, where the job is really competitive, they might be blocked from getting advanced and promoted. In other contexts, you might see that some jobs women undertake such as nursing or teaching young children are paid less compared to other profession that men undertake such as construction. Gender inequality also might take another form when young girls are only allowed to study specific kind of education that would help them later in their lives as mothers compared to what the boys from the same social class would study. Or, they might not receive the same encouragement to advance in their education like boys (Kabeer 2005, Lorber 2010).
But before we go into depth we have to define what ‘gender’ is exactly? Gender doesn’t have the same definition, as some might think, of sex. When ‘‘sex’’ refers to our biological differences, ‘‘gender’’ is the descriptive law of sex which refers to the biological differences. So, it is our social interpretation to our sex differences in femininity and masculinity boxes and afterwards apply it in our political-cultural, economic, psychosocial and also scientific behaviours (Harcourt 2009: 14, Pryzgoda & Chrisler 2000). From a feminism perspective, Lorber showed that gender has more likely imposed social classes and racial patterns on individuals rather than developed from them. Therefore, it doesn’t have individual identities or/and characteristics. Afterwards, it will provide interpretations that will become stereotypes portraying femininity as passive, weak and obedience while masculinity represents strength, braveness and perfection (ibid: Kabeer 2005, Lorber 2010).

These sources laid down the reasons behind women marginalisation in the society and attributed it to the domination of male-authority in political, educational, social and cultural spheres. Therefore Fraser’s best description of gender inequality, or let’s call it ‘‘women subordination’’, to be the social injustice that held discrimination against women. She adds, from a feminist perspective, that subordinating women is rooted in the ‘‘androcentrism’’ which gradually becomes an institutionalised law, national policies, social customs and normal practices (Fraser 1999: 31). Consequently, a gap in equal-right-sharing began to grow between men and women on a gender basis. Cornell Group defines it as ‘‘... embedded in a multidimensional structure of relationships between women and men, which, as the modern sociology of gender shows, operates at every level of human experience, from economic arrangements, culture, and the state to interpersonal relationships and individual emotions’’ (2005). Therefore, gender inequality is basically our personal comprehension about men and women that afterwards becomes entrenched in the social and cultural structure of how we see ourselves either as women or men. On the other hand, gender equality admits the existence of biological differences between men and women but rejects to base any discrimination on such differences. It provokes visibility and highlights hidden practices that continue to give men powerful authorities over women’s lives.
iv. Women Empowerment

As shown above, it is difficult to claim that empowerment has one definite, unique definition that could always be used as a model and ‘women empowerment’ definition is no different. But a look back at the historical evolution of women empowerment will help in understanding how such a unique concept emerged and the reasons behind it. Based on the field research of development literature and women empowerment especially, main findings stated that women empowerment is actually the production of the political movement of the second wave of the feminism in the 1970s which called to end women marginalisation and discrimination in their societies by their societies itself, represented in their male counterparts, and instead consider and acknowledge their effective contribution in economic development, their significant role in ensuring the wellbeing of their families and to the whole development programmes (Sweetman 2013, Lorber 2010: 4-5). Thus, various definitions and conceptualizations about women empowerment are elaborately discussed in the discourse of international development (in Women in an Insecure World, DECAF 2005).

Mehra, on her side, adopts two notions in her definition: 1) it is expanding choices for women to shape their lives 2) increasing their ability to enjoy and exercise these choices. She argues that the importance of these two concepts in principle for her, stem from their interconnectivity which means it is pointless to achieve one without the other. Therefore, for example, providing access to higher education to women without access to the labour market or some prominent positions in the government can’t be labelled as a ‘women empowerment’ (1997).

Sarah Mosedale (2005) asserts that to have a better understanding of empowerment, then there should be some sense of disempowerment beforehand and the same case applied to women empowerment. Women empowerment is not designed or intended to those of us who have access to power, those who are freely able to choose and have control over their choices and as a result of this freedom and accessibility are able to execute these choices. She explains how pointless it is to lead, design and implement women empowerment projects that are not claimed by the disempowered women themselves. Mosedale discusses the continuity of women empowerment. In her words, she describes it as ‘’an ongoing process rather than a product’’. By doing so she is rejecting some wrong perceptions that women empowerment expires once disempowered individuals are relatively empowered according to themselves or to others. And that brings us to
one of her last and strongest observations on women empowerment literature which is the importance of having a sense of ‘ownership’ in its projects. As it is necessary that empowerment should be claimed by women in the first place, it is rather more important to be included, collectively or individually, in decision-making issues that relate to their welfare and wellbeing.

In sum, women empowerment is, in principle, empowerment only with gender specification in women inclusion. Women empowerment is indeed the acknowledgment that they are marginalised in the society and then the urge to find innovative ways to eradicate social, political, educational and economic injustice. Although above stated sources didn’t explicitly state the best approach for women empowerment, I would argue that a mixture of grassroots and middle level of women empowerment is required without neglecting those who are at the top of society’s ladders for extra support and assistance, whether they are men or women, in its processes.

v. Peacebuilding: A Multidimensional Concept

Since the 90’s, a growing number of theorists have brought the concept of ‘Peace-Building’ in the field of peace and conflict studies. According to what has been studied, it was first internationally introduced and emphasised by the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 blessing the role of the UN in preserving peace and participating in building it. The evolution of the concept coincided with the ongoing cold war era between the East and the West powers whose ideologies and conflicts were actually taking places in other territories in what was called the ‘Third World’. As he based the concept’s responsibility on the shoulders of the UN and powers countries, Boutros-Ghali placed it as the last conscience relief when ‘preventive diplomacy’ fails to prevent and put an end to humanitarian catastrophes\(^\text{17}\). Therefore, he has seen

\(^{17}\)Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s report ‘An Agenda for Peace 1992’ set some central elements to prevent conflicts and find solutions for post-conflict situations in order to sustain and achieve peace. These instruments are as follow 1- Preventive Diplomacy, 2- Peacemaking, 3- Peace-Keeping and finally 4- Peace-Building. He defined preventive diplomacy according to two stages. First it is this action that is supposed and designed to prevent disputes from arising between states or parties. It also could be this action that’s supposed to prevent these arising disputes from escalating and turning into conflicts and if it turned into conflicts then preventive diplomacy should make sure to try and limit the spread of conflicts if they occur. Peacemaking is the action to bring hostile parties to an agreement through peaceful means. It might be under the chapter VI of the UN Charter. Peace-Keeping is the deployment of United Nations personnel present in the field. It might include military and/or police personnel and sometime civilians too. Peace-keeping is understood to be, sometimes, this technique that is designed to prevent conflicts and make peace.
it as a post-conflict solution that lays down foundations for rebuilding the country, assures to prevent recurrence of conflicts and builds mutual benefits between parties that were formerly at war (ibid: 1992a, 4). In simple words, his report visualises peace-building as a sophisticated foreign relations policy that can be achieved through diplomacy, corridors’ chit-chats and blue hamlets rather than a real internal initiative that stems its capacity from effected populations’ interests and motivations for building peace (ibid: 1992b).

Lederach proposes a definition that covers both the concept and grasps its importance and role in contemporary conflicts as follows “Here, peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of process, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships” (1997a, 20). Hence, peacebuilding is a multidimensional process that must comprehend 1- the motives behind the conflict in the first place and 2- possible ways to transform it and achieve peace accords at the end of a given conflict through dynamic social demands and constructs. This is compatible with Lund’s view about current peace-building initiatives that surpassed the traditional understanding of peacebuilding and became more involved in nation-building as well (2003).

As opposed to that traditional envision about peace-building, Lederach highlights that the nature and the characteristics of current conflicts require more innovative approaches that are able to capture the essence of peacebuilding and go beyond traditional diplomacy approaches that Boutros-Ghali preached for (ibid: 1997b). Therefore, he acknowledges that peacebuilding doesn’t start or end with the mere establishment of political party, held elections or announce the launch or the termination of UN missions. On the contrary, he believes that building peace for contemporary conflicts demands long- term commitment to take all necessary measures in establishing infrastructure that cuts across all levels of the society, empower any resources, initiatives for reconciliation from within the effected society itself and maximise supports from outside. He rejects Boutros-Ghali conceptualisation about peace-building on the basis that nowadays conflicts are mostly internal therefore any peace-building initiatives should be internally accepted and called for. Instead, he centralises ‘reconciliation’ as a long- term peace-building process that stems its power from elements such as mercy, justice, and truth.
On the other hand, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade described peacebuilding as ‘’the effort to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihoods of violent conflict. The overarching goal of peacebuilding is to enhance indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Peacebuilding may involve a number of activities, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post conflict reconstruction’’ (In Ray & McKay 2006, 143). Gradually, the concept paralleled with several connotations that put more and more an emphasis on affected populations’ ownership to peacebuilding plan which is able to answer their needs and enhance their capacity to solve conflicts through internal peace.

To conclude, we can understand behind these ideas the notion of peacebuilding in a post-conflict divided society as the process that is not only multidimensional but also integrated. It establishes the responsibility of the peacebuilding to respond to societies’ long-term demands through reconciliation in systematic methods that are able to cut across all levels of the society from grassroots to top levels passing through those who are in the middle level. It is worth noting that there’s no absolute knowledge of the contemporary peacebuilding plans and strategies as no single segment of the society have the optimal understanding of what peacebuilding is or should be. This would require bringing them all to the table to discuss and develop an analytical framework that best responds to their interests.

a) The Realistic Approach of Peace-Building and Women Representation:

This section will present John Paul Lederach’s proposed pyramid of peacebuilding vis-a-vis other sources on best practices and lessons learned from the field. The pyramid analyses and identifies levels of leaderships and approaches in its process for peacebuilding with no exclusion to any groups or members; which is also true and relevant to the case of Somalia. Lederach, for example, shares his perspective of understanding peacebuilding and tries to explain what are participants’ roles and justifies why each leadership is placed either in the top, middle or the bottom of the pyramid. Below is brief presentation of these types of leadership and their approaches:

18 Refer to the annex No. 2.
I. **Top-Level Leadership**: As this group is at the apex of the pyramid, it mainly consists of the key politicians, military and opposition leaders who are closely engaged in the conflict. They are, most probably, male who are perceived by the international community and the UN as influential, powerful and sometimes legitimate representative for the population of their countries. As a result, this alleged power and legitimacy will give them, often, recognition in the leadership process of peacebuilding regardless of affected populations’ demands and interests. So, in conflict scenario, they are either representative of the government or opposition which make them become highly visible in the public life and the media. In addition, in conflicts such as Somali where hierarchical powers and relations are not well-defined and more defuse, you can find many top-level leaders who don’t form a homogenous order behind united visible leader(s). Therefore, this makes the possibility to rely on the top-level leadership alone difficult and unrealistic (ibid: Lederach 1997a, 38-40). Due to the under-representation of women in this level, more precisely in decision-making arenas such as the parliament, using the reputation and the status of pioneered individuals such as the first lady, for example, might create a powerful link that is capable for lobbying political parties before and after talking and advocating for more rights and representation in legislative bodies in the parliament, for instance (in CMI report: Tønnessen & Granås Kjøstvedt, 2010a: 14).

II. **Middle-range Leadership**: This level is consisted of groups and individuals who are not necessarily controlled or connected to higher governmental authorities or other powers but still have their weight and importance in the society and among their communities. Their backgrounds vary from occupants of formal leadership positions in education, politics and health, business to religious leaders and academics to even outstanding individuals such as Nobel Prize laureates. Middle range leaders usually know and are known to the top-level leaders as well as the grassroots due to their proximity to both levels and their ability to have better connection and understanding to the broader constituency and context of the conflict. It is worth noting that individuals in this level are more numerous and relatively more influential than those who are in the top-level leadership (op.cit: Lederach 1997b, 41-42). Nevertheless, Balghis al-Badri presented another argument when she highlighted that not all is on harmony in this level and
expressed her concerns about the possibility of the existence of a gap between women in grassroots and their sisters in this level who to some extent are considered to belong to the elites in their communities. For various reasons, she considers ‘The civil society scene [is] vibrant; while not united in vision and goals, it is diverse in source of funding and capacities; all are still mainly based in Khartoum, elitist in speech and don’t reach the majority of the population’ (2005)\textsuperscript{19}.

\textbf{III. Grassroots Leadership}: It is the base and the heart of the communities that includes the leaders of local communities, members of indigenous nongovernmental organisations, women organisation/ union or refugee camp leaders and/or health officials whether they are men or women. As this category has a massive number of people, compared to previous types, most of them have been exposed to the conflict on a daily basis which as a result misshaped their lives that they used to live. Moreover, this category was most probably subjected to hatred and injustice which makes its leaders the perfect witnesses to transmit firsthand facts about the miseries of the conflict to both top-level leaders and middle range leaders. In addition, it will make them the best who can understand the importance of achieving peace as soon as possible and even be more resilient and creative in finding solution and ideas for building peace. Although they are the most victimised category in this pyramid their participation and comprehension of peacebuilding is critical and necessary (op.cit: Lederach 1997c, 42-43). For the purpose of this research, women civil societies and grassroots, among others for sure, could be one of the leaders in this area. They might not be activists per se but they could have this sense of responsibility and desire to build peace. Therefore, they might be teachers, health workers (midwives) and sometimes household mothers and wives and might have different visions for women to be also considered in peacebuilding. In other context as well, some literatures consider women civil societies and individual initiatives grassroots because most of those individuals share same concerns and interests and with time, they might consider legitimate representation for the larger community of women and girls in order to be able to boost their rights (op.cit: CMI report: Tønnessen & Granås Kjøstvedt, 2010b, Kirk: 2004a).

\textsuperscript{19} Actually this excerpt was mentioned in CMI report for Tønnessen & Granås Kjøstvedt, 2010: P5. It is for Balghis Al-Badri ‘Feminist Perspectives in the Sudan- an Analytical Overview’. (A paper presented at the workshop ‘Feminist Perspectives’ at the Free University Berlin, 2005).
I opt to present these three levels of leadership in peacebuilding in order to be able to show how each one of them has its own weight and importance, and still with some flaws, in the peacebuilding processes. As mentioned earlier, these types of levels and approaches are supposed to cut across all segments of societies. It is surprising to find the similarities between Lederach pyramid with those presented by other sources that took place in the field (ibid: Tønnessen & Granås Kjøstvedt, 2010c, Kirk: 2004b, Strickland & Duvvury: 2003). To a certain degree, they agree that it doesn’t matter where our approach for peacebuilding should start from as long as everyone is included in the process especially women due to the injustice and gender division discrimination they face during conflicts (Woroniuk: 1999: 4). Each level has, first, connection with its own people whether they are at the top, middle or the bottom of the pyramid and they also have their counterparts who see them as their rivals (ibid: Lederach 1997d). Although everyone is affected by any conflicts, the civil conflict in Somalia has a severe toll on a large number of civilians and especially women who for various reasons have been excluded from taking their role in building peace in Somalia. The need for women to be included in peacebuilding through different modalities and empower them to acquire these rights through legal international and national legalisation is critical and it will be the case of Southern parts of Somalia that will be discussed in the coming sections.

IV. Somali Women and Their Role in Owning Peace-Building
Somali women owned peace as they owned war but in their own context which is a proof that they weren’t passive at all as they were often portrayed by men and even themselves. That contrasts with the old myth that used to depict men as strong heroes whom battlefronts were chosen and made for them while women’s right place to be was their homes, looking after their children and performing various domestic errands. Out of duty to their men and to their clans, Somali women found themselves real participants in wars where they had to go to battle with their men, voluntarily or forcibly, either to cook, nurse, clean and/or to provide assistance to combatants. They were also reciting poetry and chanting prayers for their fighting men for some moral support (Dini, 1993:21, in Rodríguez Natukunda-Togboa: George-Williams, 2005a: 61). That made them, to some extent, reliable and close witnesses to the conflicts’ killings and mutilations that were taking place and sometime happening to their men let alone being raped in
front of their fathers, husbands and their own children or taken away as temporary wives or sexual slaves by other enemy clans and tribes.

I must add, all of that is a small contribution to their unmentioned involvement in peacebuilding in Somalia. While many say that in the old history of Somalia women were banned from having a say or taking an official role in peace and negotiations arena, I can say that they actually had an immense role that even behind closed doors was more powerful. Traditionally, they had orchestrated and managed local cross-clan peace negotiation and conflicts prevention before even the international community undertake any interference in the country. Being a woman in Somalia meant having multiple identities in their communities. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, they don’t have one definite clan orientation. They belong, and belonged, to their fathers’ clans when they are born and to their husbands’ once they are married off. Therefore, with time inter-clans marriages was another form of peacebuilding in order to pacify tensions between clans in the Somali community. However, the inherent patriarchal hierarchy refused to explicitly acknowledge it or to attribute any graduate to women (Gardner & El Bushra 2004, Timmons, 2004, Jama 2010).

The civil war of 1991 in Somalia, like any other intra-state conflict in Africa, has contributed to the destruction of the social networks and family-relations’ structure which was composed of men working outside, being the primary breadwinners and protectors of their families and women carrying out the normal domestic chores as mothers and wives. For survival reasons, that traditional gendered division of labour was shaken and women were forced to work both inside and outside replacing men on one side and continuing to undertake higher duties than those they were accustomed to perform and became responsible for an increased number of dependents. That created for them some sort of accessibility to extra responsibilities which, in other words, meant accessibility to power. It also made them more engaged in the conflicts as well as saving the lives of their families and communities in various ways. Therefore, that has also participated in empowering them. All these actions created some sense of resilience\(^{20}\) and urgency to end the war and bring peace to their country. Gradually, Somali women found themselves becoming

\(^{20}\) Resilience is a concept that closely goes in the same line with both empowerment and women empowerment. It is also important in the context of peacebuilding however, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss it.
very active and vocal in trying either to prevent or resolve conflicts in their communities or societies (ibid: in Rodríguez Natukunda-Togboa: George-Williams 2005b).

With all these changes and responsibilities that occurred in their lives and eventually in their status during the civil war, it has often been somehow hard for Somali women to return and accept the same old pre-war status quo of patriarchal social structure in post-conflict’s peace process. This also corresponds with Christine Bell’s claim that peacebuilding is somehow gender biased, which proved to be the case of Somalia. She stated that it:

‘‘tends to be used only at the point when the main military protagonists come together and focus on ending violence. The ‘male nature’ holds true of both internationally driven and domestically driven peace processes. [...] Assuming that the primary aim of a 33 peace process is usually to bring about a military ceasefire, it is inevitable that the process itself will focus on men.’’(in Ariño, 2010: 32).

While during these twenty-two years of civil war in Somalia, women managed to create energetic national and international networks with other women’s social and humanitarian organisation, inside or outside the country, and also strongly connected with civil society associations that has its own connections and ties with both grassroots and those in higher positions in the political arenas. As a result, they created their own initiatives and tried to build upon their achievements through women empowerment and gender equality as a source of justice and democracy. That has shown a great example of how middle range leadership is able to establish strong ties with both top-level leaderships and at the same time be able to speak the same language like those in the grassroots. Because they considered any rejection to women taking part in post-conflict peacebuilding was actually a gender concern that requires, among other things, strategies to sensitisise the society about women’s crucial roles and, also, women empowerment programmes that are demanded and established by women themselves in order to equip and familiarise them with their rights in bring peace to their torn country. (op.cit: in Rodríguez Natukunda-Togboa: George-Williams 2005c).

In light of that, following sections will, first, highlight the early steps for Somali women’s initial acknowledgement of their form of women empowerment in peacebuilding context in Mogadishu
and how they placed it perfectly in the service of peacebuilding in their communities. The second section, will point at the first international resolution that was endorsed by the UN Security Council and specifically addressed women’s issues and the necessity to include them in peacebuilding and negotiation processes. In light of that resolution, I will present how Somali women took an important step that preceded the international community to endorse such a resolution for the benefit of women and how such a step could have had an impact on the decision of the UN.

i. Women empowerment in the service of peacebuilding

In the previous section of peacebuilding, various definitions were devoted to study what peacebuilding is in different settings; however Shukria Dini has shared another definition that is reflecting the reality in the context of Somalia. She has defined it as:

‘’[The] rebuilding of relationships between groups in conflict. In the Somali context, this requires a re-achievement of the social relations of respect and cooperation between various clans which had existed prior to the civil war’’ (2006).

While what Dini is saying here could be the real concern of what can be regarded as the real case of peacebuilding situation in Somalia, the very sole agreement and cooperation between the warring clans, she also sarcastically employed how these traditional process of peacebuilding in Somalia has not been pragmatic in several occasion and only proved the necessity of the involvement for other untraditional parties in these processes. While clinging to the traditional thinking of peacebuilding, peacebuilding actors, whether they are local, national or international didn’t recognise women as active stakeholders in the recovery and peace processes for reasons that could be related to legitimacy, accessibility or acceptability of their agendas. At the end, that created a gap between what the reality is, or was, and what external and internal powers in southern Somalia wanted to achieve and with whom they wanted to achieve their agendas with.

As mothers, sisters and wives, they were, and still are, able to bring in and create more inventive initiatives in the service of the rest of the country which afterwards participated in the blooming of various women organisations in the country with different mandates. One of the first organisations that worked on peacebuilding through empowering women is the Coalition for Grassroots Women Organizations (COGWO). In 1997, it organised a workshop with some
Somali civil society organisations (CSOs) that specifically stressed on the vain attempts of some peacebuilding processes that exclusively included warlords and their counterparts of the international community and repeatedly proved its failures. Therefore, at the end of that workshop it was agreed on the importance of extending the circle so it can include other stakeholders, whether it is individuals, members of CSOs and most specifically, women. As it will be discussed later on, COGWO contributed to one of the most important initiatives that stressed upon the acknowledgment of women in peacebuilding processes in Somalia, the Sixth Clan Coalition in 2000.

On the other hand, IIDA (Women’s Development Organization) is another organisation that took women empowerment into a daring context through their ability to undertake projects such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) to help young men who were associated with armed groups. It was founded by a woman called Halima Abdi Arush in early 1991 in Mogadishu. In 1991, a crucial time in the history of the civil conflict in Somalia and most precisely in Mogadishu showed how women can use their womanly kinships and grassroots connections to slowly end conflicts and create a space for women empowerment through planning and implementing of reintegration projects for their men and sons. It is believed that initiatives such as those of the IIDA could have paved the way for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the international community to come to realise that women are the best agents of change in peacebuilding and security enforcement in Mogadishu. The Women Civilian Protection Unit (WCPU) was the result of that realisation when it proved that women can’t only be associated with vulnerability but they could also be actors of building peace and security. It is worth noting that this innovative pilot initiative has been initially formed by women to empower themselves through security and peacebuilding processes in Mogadishu in order to secure their communities. According to UNDP, the women’s essential role in this pilot was to rehabilitate and reintegrate youth who formerly got involved with militia and armed groups. One of the key achievements of it was the ability to recruit women from various backgrounds so they could be benefited and empowered including those who’ve suffered the most, IDPs women. It also succeeded in recruiting around 500 women from IDPs camps and residents of Mogadishu and other 120 as women police officers to provide protection to their communities in 5 different districts in Mogadishu.
My argument is that, Somali women's active involvement as peacebuilding and security actors in these units has gradually increased their social, economic, and political empowerment significantly. Also, projects like the one that has been undertaken by (WCPU) only illustrated, first, that Somali women are well familiar with what women empowerment actually is and what are the best ways to precede with it in ways that are in line with their context. Secondly, the civil war in Somalia only produced resilient women who can in the middle of destruction and suffering be the best and the most proactive agents in building the nation of their country. A relevant question to be asked is why are there so few initiatives like the (WCPU) in Mogadishu and other regions in the southern parts of the country? What are the challenges and are they internal or external ones? As Dini pointed out, international community represented by the UN, has not been serious enough in considering women as serious counterparts in the process and that was demonstrated in one of Ban Ki Moon’s visit to Mogadishu where he only met male leaders and didn’t make the effort to holding a meeting with women. Finally, in light of that, she highlighted the importance of taking responsibilities towards women’s involvement and participation in peacebuilding and security in order to achieve comprehensive and successful results that will hopefully bring an end to the disastrous situation in Somalia (Schumicky 2012).

**ii. Somali Women and their Roles in Peacebuilding processes (UNSCR 1325)**

The realisation of the international community of the importance of women’s voices and their involvements in making difference especially in the processes of peace-building and peace negotiations has led to the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 31st October 2000. The resolution among other points has emphasized the unfairness that happens during armed conflicts mainly where women and men are not affected by these conflicts proportionately which, therefore, requires in the post-conflict step: ‘’the inclusion of women and women’s issues in all official peace negotiations, analysis of women’s inclusion in and contributions to such negotiations will be crucial to the evolution of peace in theory and practice’’ (Timmons, 2004a: 1).

In the case of women in Somalia, it is a common saying that although women can build peace only men can make it (op.cit: Jama 2010). However, such realities and what women have gone through actually contributed to one of the precedent moves that took place even before the adoption of (1325) resolution when ‘Save Somali Women and Children organisation’ (SSWC),
was established in 1992, and has formed the ‘‘Sixth Clan Coalition (SCC)’’\textsuperscript{21} to participate in the peace negotiation in Arta, Djibouti in 2000. It’s worth noting that for the first time around 100 women were elected to participate and represent their clans along with 2000/3000 men in Arta peace negotiation. However, the formation of the SCC came as a rejection to the intentions and plans of the leaders of these five clans to advocate for peace accords based on clan’s identities and powers. Their rejection came on the basis of two reasons. First, the SCC understood that accepting such a path would only reinforce the same wrong mentality and ideologies that caused the civil war between clans in the country. Secondly, accepting, will gradually challenge and undermine their inclusion in any prospect peacebuilding processes. By establishing the SCC, Somali women understood that there’s no place for any peace accords that is, firstly, male-dominated, secondly, keeps prioritising clanism that continues to spark violence and create divisions among Somalis today and lastly surpasses other groups voices and identities in the society including women. According to Asha Hagi Elmi Amin, the leader of the Sixth Clan, parliament’s member and the first women legislator in the Federal Parliament of Somalia in Aug 2012:

‘‘Our purpose was to create space for women in the peace process and to build a bridge to policy. The Sixth Clan was born out of frustration. Within our society, although victims of conflict we had no voice for the national solution. In a patriarchal society such as ours, women have no right to represent their clan, nor any responsibility for protecting the clan. A group of us had the idea to form our own clan, in addition to the five pre-existing clans. The Sixth Clan gave us the first political entry point for women as equal partners in decision making’’ (op.cit: in Rodríguez Natukunda-Togboa, 2005: 38-39).

This story of the SCC contributed to other milestone achievements that women were and still are able to achieve in the official corridors of peacebuilding in Somalia. As Debra M. Timmons describes what followed, she says:

‘‘The peace process continues. The Nairobi talks concluded on January 29, 2004, with an agreement for a new parliament and government structure to replace the TNG. This plan calls

\textsuperscript{21} Sixth Clan Coalition was a women coalition of those who belonged to one of the five main clans that were participating in the Arta peace negotiation. Therefore, it was not a clan based. The five clans were Dir, Digil-Mirifle, Hawiye, Darood, and Alliance of Minorities.
for the appointment of members from each of the clans to form a 275-member parliament, with 12 percent of the seats reserved for women delegates. The Sixth Clan Coalition passed another milestone at the Nairobi conference, as its leader, Asha Haji Elmi, became the first women in Somali history to sign a peace agreement” (op.cit: 2004b: 20).

In conclusion, Somali women’s movements in general and members of the Sixth Clan Coalition in particular in the southern of Somalia, understood that any peacebuilding and peace negotiations should be bottom based initiative that moves gradually from grassroots to upwards. For such mechanism to be properly implemented it requires awareness and understanding from the Somali national and local actors of women’s rights and rules in peacebuilding as well as women’s themselves awareness of international resolution such as the 1325 that can fulfil the demands and answers questions of women. Because they believed in their crucial rules and rights in peace process, they were able, for the first time, in Arta’s conference to form an homogenous bloc that were able to take part in the negotiation and the creation of the national charter that a) for the first time was able to reserve 25 seats for women in 245- members of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA) b) guaranteed and protected human rights of women, children and minorities as well (ibid: Timmons, 2004c: 19, Rehn & Sirleaf 2002).

V. Conclusion

This paper introduced an overall description of how women’s situations generally in Somalia and particularly in the southern region of the country managed to have a role in shaping their destinies. Despite the prevailing theory that women were marginalised and were only a portrait of victimisation nevertheless, a closer look and study to some of these hypothesis proved that Somali women, were waiting for the right moment and factors to state their roles to combat and recover from violence. They managed to create an environment that entailed national ownership and still demands their participation despite the odds of inherent patriarchal society even before the eruption of the civil war. A detailed literature review was devoted to study the similarity that both women empowerment and peacebuilding have when their approaches are discussed. This paper has also presented how women involvement in peacebuilding processes in south Somalia proved that their roles are vital especially when we take into consideration that peacebuilding and peace negotiations are no longer ‘‘seen as something top people do in top places. But rather
it comes to be seen as a continuum that parallels the continuum of violence” (Bates 2000:83). In addition to that, the study has also showed that there is a dire need for an effective women empowerment which eventually will expand their participation in politics and it will promote democracy and economic advancement. Afterwards, two examples from two Somali women organisations’ initiatives illustrated two realities. First, Somali women were and are not weak. They were only waiting for the right moment to take their lead and that right moment proved to be during the bad long civil war. Therefore, they gained power and empowered themselves and women communities as a result. Second, they well-understood how to integrate women empowerment and peacebuilding together in their own contexts even before UN resolution was adopted.

But, we should recognise that the reality of women empowerment and their involvement in peacebuilding is not as bright and crystal-cut as some might think. Although more field research is supposed to take place in order to present a comprehensive study that combines the different aspects of both concepts in south Somalia, it still tries to shed the light on the urgency to acknowledge that there are few constrains. One of these constrains is the hesitation of the international community to undertake a serious stand for more Somali women to be included in peacebuilding negotiations and round-tables and I believe that was clearly presented in Ki Moon’s last visit to Mogadishu. The second constrain is the lack of a unified coordination between the Somali women organizations and their partnership with international ones which occasionally continues to surpass women’s efforts for an effective empowerment that would eventually create a space for women in peacebuilding rounds.

Finally, as Dini said: "there are only two things going for Somalia: Both God and women have not let Somalia down." (2006). Somali women made a lot of progress to change the climate of violence in Somalia and that, among other initiatives, deserved to be acknowledge and supported internally and internationally.
Annexes:

Annex 1: History of Somalia

a) *Somali and the colonisation era:*

Somalia or the Somali Democratic Republic lies in the Horn of Africa. However, during the imperial era, it was colonised by Great Britain, Italy, France and Ethiopia. By 1885, there were five colonies, Great Britain colonised the north-central part and called it ‘British Somaliland’ while the south was controlled by Italy and the west, Ogaden Somalia, was an Ethiopia colony, the north west was the French Somaliland or as it’s called currently ‘Djibouti’ and it was controlled by France and finally the south-western part that was under the Kenyan control and it was called ‘Northern Frontier District’.

Fitzgerald briefly presented in her book the colonial motivations and interests for both of Great Britain and Italy. Britain wanted to have an access to Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean in the northern of Somalia. Geographically, its position in the Gulf of Aden was very important to import livestock from Berbara to Aden, Yemen and from there to abroad. Also, it was the main supply post en route to India via the Suez Canal. While the southern part of Somalia made a perfect choice for plantation and agriculture for the Italian administration (Fitzgerald 2002a).

During the World War II, Italy invaded the British Somaliland and expelled the British troops. However, British forces retook the territory back in 1941. In return, the British troops didn’t only restore its colony back but it also attacked both the Italian and Ogaden colonies. Things remained still and the three colonies continued to be under the British control. During Potsdam Conference in 1945, the issue was discussed and decided that these colonies will not be returned to Italy or Ethiopia. In 1948, Britain returned Ogaden to Ethiopia under the pressure of its allies in the WWII and to the dismay of the Somali citizens who are the most inhabitants of that territory. Later on, the matter was transferred to the UN General Assembly which decided, in 1949, to return the southern Italian colony to Italy but under what was agreed on as ‘UN Trusteeship’ (Fitzgerald 2002b, Lewis 1969, Besteman 1995 581). When many countries were getting independence from its colonies, nationalism was growing in Somalia. The result was the establishment of the first political party, SYC in 1943 that later changed to the SYL in 1947. SYL goals were as follow: 1- Unify all Somalis under one Somalia. 2- Achieve independence. 3-
Oppose clanism. The creation of this political part raised concern in the colonial powers and forced them to make some improvements such as enhancing the health infrastructure education facilities and possibly include them in the political processes of Somalia (ibid: Fitzgerald 2002, 22).

In the summer of 1960, only the Italian Somaliland and the former British Somaliland formed what became known as the ‘Republic of Somalia’ once independence was achieved. On the other hand, a referendum was held on the eve of 1959, a day before Somali’s independence to determine whether Djibouti will join Somalia or remain under France administration. The poll showed many were in favour to remain with France and those majorities were from Afar, non-Somali ethnicity and expatriates. In regard to Ogaden, Ethiopia claimed sovereignty over the territory once Britain declared that Somali inhabitants of the territory are entitled to retain autonomy. It is worth noting here too, that the majority of the populations in the Ogaden are Somalis.
**b) Somalia from 1960 upwards**

After independence on the 1st July 1960, Abdirashiid Ali Shermarkee was Somalia's first elected president. He believed on national integration which was exactly one of the main objectives that resistance movements had called for (ibid: Fitzgerald 2002, 22). However, Shermarkee's government was quickly criticised by the military body of Somalia of being corrupt and practicing favouritism which consequently ended his life in October 1969 and brought his government to be replaced in coup d'état by the SRC. SRC, as mentioned above was a military constitution which came to power after electing Mohammed Siad Barre as new president. Siad Barre's scientific socialist government was seen as a controversial entity that attacked traditional ways of ruling Somalia. As a result he gradually limited the role of religious mens’ interference in political matters and fought hard against clanism.

He also called everyone to participate in politics describing it as an open space for everyone to take part in with no limitations to clan, profession or class which created an atmosphere of hostilities. He also did his best not to let these hostilities get out of hand. Despite the government's attempts and calls for systematic changes to place the country on the right path for development and progress, many inherited clans and lineage remained a challenge in the face of government's efforts.
c) *International Political ties towards the end:*

Because of his socialist vision for the future of the country, Barre worked on strengthening the country’s external ties with the Soviet Union. The latter worked side by side and provided Barre with arms and military assistance. Ties between the two countries continued to be stable until 1977 when Barre decided to launch a war against Ethiopia in order to regain Ogaden. The Soviet Union had other plans when it shifted its support and alliance to Ethiopia and provided it instead with military aide and weapons. Such a move changed the odds upside down and pulled the country down to an exhausting and not equal war with Ethiopia. Finally, Somalia lost the war in 1978.

The country experienced a bitter defeat and Barre found another ally in the USA. After a few failures for the US government, making an ally with Somalia was the best solution at that time. Although Somalia was on the brink of collapsing not because of its late war with Ethiopia alone but also due to some internal resistance movements in the north, USA started providing Barre’s government with weapons, military trainings and finally they signed a military access agreement allowing USA to use the Somalia ports and airfield at time of crisis (ibid: Fitzgerald 2002, 24-25; Besteman 1995, 581).

Towards the end of Barre's government, it was accused of nepotism considerations as well as clan-based hierarchy and discrimination. Several oppositions groups were created inside and outside Somalia to overthrow Barre’s government. Where the international community dates the eruption of the civil war in 1991, Somalis date it back to 1988 when Barre sent his military troops to launch military attack and bloody destruction in the main city of the north, Hargiesa. Thousands fled to neighbouring countries and the result was the beginning of one of the most protracted civil wars for more than 20 years. Siad Barre’s government collapsed in 1991.

22 Some of these political groups are the SSDF, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front. This was the first opposition movements in Somalia and it was dedicated to topple Barre’s government by force. While the SNM, Somali National Movement for the Northern of Somalia, was created by some dissidents from the Isaaq clan in London in 1981. Another opposition part was one of his clan’s rivals, the Hawiye who formed USC, United Somali Congress. Finally, the Ogaden organized their own political party, Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) in 1985. Their reasons of creating this party were mainly blaming Barre for his failure in the Ogaden war, making peace treaty with Ethiopia in 1988 and resuming the diplomatic relations with it. For more information about this please check I.M. Lewis 1994 ‘’Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society’’ & N.J. Fitzgerald ‘’Somalia: Issues, History, and Bibliography’’. 
Somaliland, the northern part of the country, has declared self-independence from collapsing Somali in May 1991 and established its own government and constitution therefore it has been enjoying relative security, rehabilitation and rebuilding process since 1997. This was followed by Puntland that was established as autonomous regional state 1998. Both governments in the North (Somaliland), the North Eastern (Puntland) have shown strong resilience and were lucky and quick enough to withdraw themselves from the general instability and violence that characterised Mogadishu, the south.
Annex 2: Peacebuilding

Types of Actors

Level 1: Top Leadership
Military/political/religious leaders with high visibility

Focus on high-level negotiations
Emphasizes cease-fire
Led by highly visible, single mediator

Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership
Leaders respected in sectors
Ethnic/religious leaders
Academics/intellectuals
Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Problem-solving workshops
Training in conflict resolution
Peace commissions
Insider-partial teams

Level 3: Grassroots Leadership
Local leaders
Leaders of indigenous NGOs
Community developers
Local health officials
Refugee camp leaders

Local peace commissions
Grassroots training
Prejudice reduction
Psychosocial work in postwar trauma


1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.

2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.

3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster.

4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.

5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component.

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children’s Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;
8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
(b) Measures that support local women’s peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;
(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;


10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;
13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women’s groups;

16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.
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