

The Horn Tribune

Vol VI/ Issue 1650 Sunday 31 May 2026 (www.horntribune.com/info@horntribune.com) Dul-Haj 14, 1447 AH

An Independent Weekly Newspaper of Dawan Media Group, Tel: 0634108231/0634424590/0634615145

Respect Regional Peace: President Abdirahman Irro tells Djibouti and Somalia

Somaliland's foreign policy is founded on good neighbourliness, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect, he maintains



By M.A. Egge
R epublic of Somaliland's foreign policy remains firmly rooted in peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and good neighbourly relations. The statement was made vivid by H.E. President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro over the week in his Idd ul Adha address and messages that also cautioned

Continue on Page 2



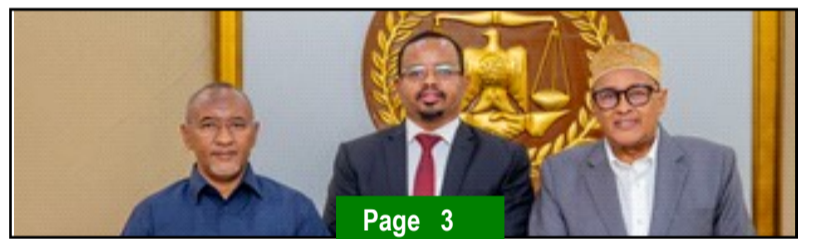
A Legacy Left, A Promise Made: Mooge Departs Proudly, Eng Wiiwaa Pledges to Serve Equally



By M.A. Egge
T he outgoing Mayor of Hargeisa, Cllr. Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge, cautioned Somalilanders that the international community was closely observing

Continue on Page 2

Former Gabiley Mayor Joins Somaliland's Ruling WADDANI Party, Pledges Full Support to President Irro



Page 3

WADDANI Central Committee Summit Set for June 30 as Chairman Afgaab Calls on Members to Prepare for Key Hargeisa Gathering



Mohamoud Walaaleye
T he Chairman of the Central Committee of the WADDANI Party and Somaliland's Minister of Transport and Road

Continue on Page 2

Waddani Chairman Calls for Forgiveness and Unity, Hails Public Reception During Eid Gathering with President Irro



Page 4

Taiwan's Inclusive Democracy and One National Identity: The Foundations of Prosperity Lessons for Somaliland's Future



By Salma A. Sheikh
I was among fifteen international journalists invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan to participate in the 2026 International

Continue on Page 3

Somaliland's Embassy Strategy: It's Up to the Host Country – Ambassador Goth Sets the Record Straight



Mohamoud Walaaleye
R epublic of Somaliland's Representative to the United States and Canada,

Page 4

Somaliland Finance Minister Sends Strong Message to Mogadishu, Reaffirms Firm Political Stance

Mohamoud Walaaleye
M inister of Finance and Economic Development, Hon. Abdillahi Hassan, has issued a strongly worded message directed at the federal government in Mogadishu, reiterating



Somaliland's position that it will not reverse its political stance. In his remarks, the minister used forceful language emphasizing Somaliland's historical and current political separation and resistance, saying:

Continue on Page 2

Central Bank of Somaliland Attends ACCIS 2026 Conference in Vienna



Page 4

Buried Histories, Living Peace: The Intellectual Legacy in the Horn of Africa

T his article presents the theoretical and methodological innovations underlying the Archaeology of Peace, a subfield founded by Dr. Sada Mire through two decades of



Page 5

Inside

Why Britain Risks Missing Out on Somaliland's Emerging Recognition Opportunities- Telegraph Continue on page 4

Respect Regional Peace:..



neighbouring countries against actions acts that threaten regional stability. Speaking on current regional affairs, President Irro said that Somaliland has recently faced uncalled for hostility from several countries given the nation's progressive aspirations and specifically told both Djibouti and Somalia to respect regional peace and maintain constructive neighbourly ties. "Many countries today have shown hostility toward Somaliland. I tell

Djibouti and Somalia to respect peace and good neighbourliness," President Irro stated. The Somaliland president emphasized that the government's diplomatic approach is based on peaceful coexistence and international respect. He pointed out that the sky is the limit for the aspirations of the people and that no dark forces can stop it. "Somaliland's foreign policy is founded on good neighbourliness, peaceful coexistence, and mutual

respect," he said, adding that the peoples' aspirations are unstoppable. Alongside regional concerns, President Abdirahman Irro addressed the severe drought conditions continuing to affect many parts of Somaliland. He lamented that the ongoing drought has forced many families to leave their homes searching for water and pasture in other regions. "In many parts of the country, the drought still continues. I pray to Allah to shower us with good and beneficial rain," the President said. He further called on citizens to unite in prayer and solidarity during the difficult period. "Many people have migrated from their regions to other areas. We pray that Allah accepts our supplications, grants us beneficial rainfall, and relieves us from the drought," he said. He reminded Somalilanders to uphold their traditional values of compassion, alms giving and social unity by supporting relatives, neighbours, and vulnerable members of society. "I remind everyone to look after their relatives and neighbours so that we may all celebrate Eid together in happiness," he concluded.

WADDANI Central.....

Development, Osman Ibrahim Nur Afgaab, has officially announced that the party's Central Committee conference will take place on **30 June 2026** in Hargeisa. Speaking on the upcoming meeting, Afgaab described the conference as an important gathering for the party and urged all members of the Central Committee to ensure their attendance. He said the early announcement was intended to provide members with sufficient time to make the necessary preparations for participation. The meeting is expected to bring together Central Committee members from across the country as the party discusses key organizational and political matters.

While the detailed agenda has not yet been made public, the conference is anticipated to be one of the party's most significant internal meetings this year. Addressing party members, Afgaab stated: "I would like to send a message to the members of the WADDANI Party's Central Committee and inform them that the party's Central Committee meeting will be held on June 30 in Hargeisa. I am notifying all members so that they can attend this important gathering." The announcement marks the beginning of preparations for the conference, with party officials expected to release further details regarding the program and proceedings in the coming weeks.

Somaliland Finance.....



"We are telling the Somali people that Afweyne (late dictator Siad Barre) is gone, the 'Faqash' (former Somalia regime) is gone and will never return. We defeated them before, and now it is the children of those who died who are defending the nation. Whatever the cost to us, we will fight, and we are prepared to the hilt for it." The statement reflects ongoing political tensions between

Somaliland and Somalia's federal government. While Somaliland continues to pursue international recognition as an independent state, Somalia's federal government maintains its position on absurd national unity, though its long-standing ambition to restore own (Italian Somalia) territorial cohesion faces ongoing political and practical challenges.

A Legacy Left, A Promise Made: Mooge.....



the nation to see whether it would be tripped by the de jure status it recently achieved. The cautionary note was in essence an appeal to the people and the nation of Somaliland to uphold and safeguard peaceful solidarity and national cohesive tranquillity such that the country may prosper at a faster rate. The pragmatic politician who happens to be a darling of the populaces was expressing the sentiments as he was addressing a gathering that grace the occasion of his handing over the mantle of the city helmanship, a post that he held for the past five years and opted to resign from at a time his populism soared. On top of his acclaimed legacy, he is leaving office without incurring debts, a landmark in the nation's administrative acumen. He is leaving office with his head held high for the formidable progress he has achieved. Mayor Mooge called on the people of Somaliland to demonstrate unity, maturity, and responsibility in order

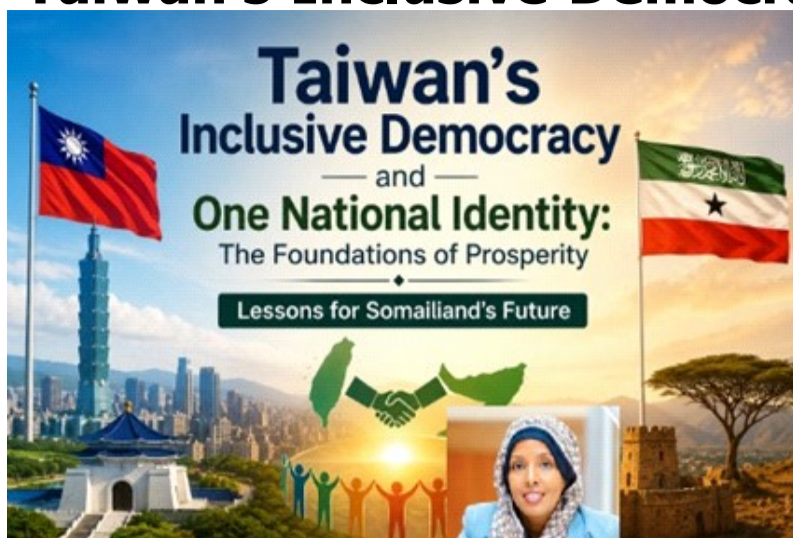
to show the world that Somaliland is a nation built on 35 years of resilience, stability, and state-building. He said, "The world is now watching us closely. People are asking whether Somaliland will successfully uphold this first recognition it has received. Let us show the world that we will not fail", and added, "lets show that we are a responsible people who have patiently built and sustained Somaliland nation for the past 35 years and brought it to where it is today. Let us also demonstrate that we can take it even further, by the Grace of God". The former Hargeisa mayor has stated that throughout the five years he served in the office, he regarded the position entrusted upon him as a sacred trust of responsibility held on behalf of the people. He noted that serving one's community and country is one of the highest honours a person can be bestowed upon. He expressed his gratitude to the people of Hargeisa for the trust and

confidence they placed in him during his tenure. He said, "After five years of serving you, I have always viewed this office as a trust. There is no greater honour than serving your people and your country. Today, I stand before you returning the trust you placed in me, and I do so with great pride and satisfaction." It is worth noting that the outgoing mayor has had his legacy hailed widely and the most vast and tangible progress has been witnessed in his rein. On his part, the newly inaugurated Mayor of Hargeisa, Cllr. Abdirizak Farah Wiiwaa, has pledged to serve all residents of the capital equally, declaring that his administration will focus on strengthening public services and advancing the city's development. Speaking during the official handover ceremony, Mayor Wiiwaa emphasized that the office of mayor belongs to all citizens and carries a responsibility to serve the entire community. "Starting today, I am the Mayor of Hargeisa, and all residents of Hargeisa are equal in my eyes," he said. During the ceremony, Hargeisa Municipal Executive Secretary Mukhtar Mohamed Gahnuug (Boosh-Adde) revealed that outgoing Mayor Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge left office without any outstanding municipal debt. "Mayor Mooge did not hand over any debt today," Boosh-adde stated.

He also praised Mooge's tenure, describing him as a dedicated leader who worked tirelessly for the development of Hargeisa and consistently prioritized the city's progress. Meanwhile, the newly appointed Deputy Mayor, Eng. Aadan Jama Mideeye, acknowledged the weight of the responsibilities ahead, stressing the need for hard work and cooperation to meet the expectations of residents. "Today we feel a growing weight of responsibility, one that we ourselves sought and willingly accepted," he said. The ceremony marked the end of Mooge's five-year administration and the beginning of a new chapter under Mayor Wiiwaa, who now faces the task of building on recent achievements while addressing the evolving needs of Hargeisa's growing population. Wiiwaa's remarks came as municipal leaders and officials gathered to mark a transition in the

leadership of Somaliland's capital city. During the ceremony, Hargeisa Municipal Executive Secretary Mukhtar Mohamed Gaxnuug (Boosh-Cadde) revealed that outgoing Mayor Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge left office without any outstanding municipal debt. "Mayor Mooge did not hand over any debt today," Boosh-Cadde stated. He also praised Mooge's tenure, describing him as a dedicated leader who worked tirelessly for the development of Hargeisa and consistently prioritized the city's progress. Meanwhile, the newly appointed Deputy Mayor, Eng. Aadan Jama Mideeye, acknowledged the weight of the responsibilities ahead, stressing the need for hard work and cooperation to meet the expectations of residents. "Today we feel a growing weight of responsibility, one that we ourselves sought and willingly accepted," he said.

Taiwan's Inclusive Democracy.....



Press Group on Taiwan's Political and Economic Development. The delegation brought together journalists from the United States, France, Canada, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Australia, Israel, Thailand, Kosovo, and the Republic of Somaliland.

For five intensive days in Taipei, the delegation engaged with some of Taiwan's most important national institutions. We met senior government officials, policymakers, innovators, researchers, and diplomats, including deputy ministers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme was rigorous, intellectually engaging, and strategically organised to expose delegates to Taiwan's political resilience, economic transformation, technological advancement, and democratic development.

The Taiwanese officials we encountered displayed exceptional diplomatic discipline, confidence, and national pride. They answered difficult questions openly and gracefully while demonstrating an unwavering commitment to defending their country, preserving their democracy, and strengthening their place in the international community. Beyond policy and politics, what stood out most was the civility, humility, and collective national spirit visible throughout Taiwanese society.

Yet, as a journalist from Somaliland, my greatest interest was not merely Taiwan's military preparedness or economic success. My focus was on something deeper: how inclusive democracy and a unified national identity have enabled Taiwan to transform itself into one of the world's most advanced and respected societies.

Having spent more than a decade advocating for women's political participation and social inclusion in Somaliland, including serving as Lead Gender Advisor at Somaliland's House of Representatives, I continuously asked myself an important question throughout this visit:

How did Taiwan succeed in creating a democratic system where women are not symbolic participants but genuine partners in nation-building?

This question became increasingly important as we toured institution after institution. One of Taiwan's most admirable qualities is the collective participation of its citizens in advancing national development. Democracy in Taiwan does not appear to be confined to elections alone; it is embedded in institutions, public service, innovation, and national culture.

In many of the institutions we visited, women occupied meaningful professional and leadership roles. Initially, I wondered whether these positions were merely cosmetic. However, the deeper we travelled into Taiwan's institutional landscape, the clearer the answer became.

One of the most revealing moments came during our visit to the Taiwan Space Agency (TASA), the institution responsible for Taiwan's space affairs and technological advancement. Established in 1991 under Taiwan's National Science and Technology Council, TASA represents one of the country's most strategic scientific institutions.

To my surprise and admiration, seven of the ten senior management officials who received the international delegation were women. The meeting itself was led by the Deputy Director-General, Ms. Chung-Huei Vicky. These women were not ceremonial figures; they were scientists, engineers, decision-makers, and leaders shaping Taiwan's future in science and technology.

For me, this was one of the clearest demonstrations that Taiwan's democracy is genuinely inclusive.

Another remarkable encounter took place at the Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI), Taiwan's national design and innovation institute established under the Ministry of Economic Affairs in 2020.

TDRI revealed another dimension of Taiwan's national strategy: the deliberate use of design, innovation, and creativity to strengthen national identity and improve public life.

Taiwan does not treat design as decoration. It treats design as a strategic national instrument.

Through TDRI, Taiwan integrates design thinking into industrial innovation, transportation systems, public services, digital transformation, environmental

sustainability, urban planning, branding, and international image-building. The institution brings together engineers, designers, universities, businesses, and government agencies to create practical solutions that improve citizens' daily lives while strengthening Taiwan's competitiveness globally.

Once again, women were visibly present throughout the institution as designers, researchers, engineers, presenters, and senior professionals. The environment reflected a society that values competence, education, and contribution over gender barriers.

The lesson became unmistakably clear: Taiwan's extraordinary progress is not the achievement of men alone, nor of a ruling elite isolated from society. It is the result of a collective national effort in which women and men participate side by side under one national identity and one democratic vision.

Taiwan's strength lies not only in its economy or technology, but in its ability to unite its people around a shared national purpose while allowing diverse voices to participate in shaping the nation's future.

This is where Somaliland must pay close attention.

The Republic of Somaliland has achieved remarkable accomplishments under extremely difficult circumstances. It has built peace, stability, democratic elections, and functioning institutions without international recognition. Yet Somaliland still faces serious internal challenges related to political inclusion, social fragmentation, clan division, and the limited participation of women and young professionals in national leadership.

No nation can achieve its full potential while excluding large segments of its population from meaningful participation.

Inclusive democracy is not a Western slogan; it is a strategic necessity for national development, international legitimacy, and long-term stability.

Taiwan demonstrates that when citizens, regardless of gender or background, feel represented within national institutions, they become active stakeholders in defending and developing their country. Inclusion creates ownership. Ownership creates patriotism. Patriotism strengthens national resilience.

Similarly, a unified national identity is essential for Somaliland's future. Taiwan's people may hold diverse political opinions, but they share a strong sense of belonging to one Taiwan. That shared identity strengthens their institutions and protects their democracy.

Somaliland must continue building one national identity that rises above tribal, regional, and political

divisions. The nation's future should not belong to a small political class or to one segment of society. It must belong equally to all Somalilanders; women and men, youth and elders, intellectuals and entrepreneurs alike.

My visit to Taiwan was truly eye-opening. I did not merely witness technological advancement or economic success; I witnessed a nation that has invested in its people, trusted its women, strengthened its

institutions, and united its citizens around a common national vision. That is the true foundation of Taiwan's prosperity.

My hope is that Somaliland will embrace similar principles of inclusive democracy, institutional development, and collective national identity so that our nation, too, can achieve even greater progress, international respect, and lasting prosperity alongside our great ally, Taiwan.

Former Gabiley Mayor Joins.....



Mohamoud Walaaleye

In a move seen as a boost for Somaliland's ruling party, former Gabiley District Mayor Mohamed-Amin Omar Abdi has officially joined the governing WADDANI Party, following a high-profile meeting with President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro at the Presidential Palace on Saturday.

According to a statement issued by the Presidential Spokesperson, President Irro warmly welcomed the former mayor into the party, describing his decision as a reflection of the growing public and political confidence in WADDANI's vision, principles, and development agenda.

The meeting was attended by senior government and party officials, including the Chairman of the WADDANI Party, Hon. Hersi Ali H. Hassan, the Minister of Planning and National Development, the Minister of Civil Aviation and Airport Development, and the Presidential Spokesperson. The officials delivered remarks welcoming Mohamed-Amin and encouraging his participation in the party's ongoing efforts to advance Somaliland's development.

Speaking during the meeting, Mohamed-Amin expressed his

gratitude to President Irro for the warm reception and formally announced his membership in the WADDANI Party. He pledged to work closely with both the government and the ruling party in support of Somaliland's national goals.

The former mayor also praised President Irro's leadership and vision, commending what he described as significant achievements during the President's relatively short time in office. He highlighted progress in diplomacy, efforts to strengthen social cohesion, the preservation of peace and stability, and initiatives aimed at enhancing Somaliland's standing and reputation in the international arena.

Political observers are likely to view the move as another sign of WADDANI's expanding influence, as the ruling party continues to attract experienced political figures and local leaders from across Somaliland.

The latest development underscores the shifting political landscape in Somaliland and reinforces WADDANI's efforts to consolidate support ahead of its broader governance and development agenda.

Waddani Chairman Calls for Forgiveness and Unity.....

Mohamoud Walaaleye
The Chairman of the Waddani Party, Hon. Hirsi Ali H. Hassan, has described the public reception he and Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro received during an Eid visit to Asood Hotel as a powerful sign of the people's goodwill and affection. In a message shared on his Facebook page, Hirsi said the delegation, led by President Irro, joined members of the public at Casood Hotel to celebrate the joy of Eid alongside elders, intellectuals, and traditional leaders gathered at the venue.



"We paid a visit to Asood Hotel under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro, where we shared the happiness of Eid with the people gathered there, including distinguished figures, elders, and traditional leaders," Chairman Hirsi wrote. Speaking at the gathering, he said the warm reception and appreciation shown by the community deeply moved the delegation and reflected the strong bond between the leadership and the public. "We were delighted by the warm welcome and appreciation we

received from our people. It clearly demonstrates the goodwill and trust they have towards us," he said. During his remarks, Hirsi also commended the head of State for choosing to celebrate Eid among ordinary citizens, saying the public values leaders who engage directly with the people and understand their concerns. "People appreciate leaders who sit with them and understand them, and that feeling was visible on the faces of those present," Hirsi noted. "The President has the humble wisdom to meet his people directly, allowing them to pray for him and offer

constructive advice. This is something the public truly admires, and I congratulate the President for it." In a message aimed at reconciliation and unity, the Waddani chairman emphasized the importance of forgiveness during festive occasions, calling on society to embrace tolerance and mutual understanding. "During these joyful days, people should forgive one another. We have forgiven everyone, and we also ask the members of the public to forgive us," he concluded.

Why Britain Risks Missing Out on Somaliland's Emerging Recognition Opportunities- Telegraph

By failing to recognize Somaliland, the UK is letting military and trading opportunities slip away. Sitting in a gilded armchair in his official palace, President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi looks every inch the statesman. As well he might: unusually for East Africa, Somaliland has free and fair elections, a two-chamber parliament in its capital, Hargeisa, a legal system inspired by British colonial law and an army that is accountable to its politicians. Its deposits of gold and rare earths are being explored, and its 530 miles of coastline lead to the Bab al-Mandab strait – a maritime chokepoint between the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. Up to 15 per cent of global shipping passes through the strait, which is sometimes menaced by Houthi drones and missiles. The military and trading opportunities are obvious. Yet Britain, despite its intertwined history with the state, has long refused to recognize its legitimacy through fear of jeopardizing its other interests and diplomatic ties. It therefore risks losing out on the key strategic benefits that recognizing Somaliland could bring – and countries such as China are already moving in to fill the void. President Abdullahi, wearing his trademark gold-embroidered hat, tells The Telegraph: "Our relationship with Britain is unshakeable, but we expect Britain to recognize us. If Britain supports human rights, freedom of speech and democratic stability, it should give us its support." Britain holds a crucial diplomatic position in shaping Somaliland's future as the

United Nations (UN) "penholder", making it responsible for the region. Mr. Abdullahi accuses the UK of double standards in not recognizing Somaliland. He claims it passes all the tests of statehood in the Montevideo Convention, whereas the newly recognized State of Palestine does not. The Somaliland position has, though, been weakened by jihadi-backed militia seizing control of stretches of its territory in lawless border areas. A frontier dispute with neighbouring Puntland, another breakaway Somali state, also threatens its claim to exert undisputed authority. Mr Abdullahi, known as Irro, pointed to how his unrecognized country had had a quarter of a century of elections and kept terrorism and piracy in check. Meanwhile, Somalia remains a failed state. Somaliland could offer Britain a strategic force projection and trading advantages, analysts say, but after decades of diplomatic equivocation, London's influence on the ground is waning. In its place, China is scrambling to expand its military presence in Africa in a race for power against the US. Beijing already has a naval base in neighbouring Djibouti and is transforming strategic ports so it can service warships and reach nearby mines easily to transport critical minerals. Turkey is turning Somalia into a client state and Gulf states are also pursuing their own interests. One of Hargeisa's major allies is the United Arab Emirates (UAE), whose shipping giant, DP World, has invested \$442m (£329m) in Berbera, Somaliland's main port. This promises to become the new gateway to East Africa: an anticipated

deal with landlocked Ethiopia could see maritime trade increase by 40 per cent. Berbera is also home to a major Emirati military complex, with one of Africa's longest runways, which is under construction opposite Houthi territory across the Gulf of Aden. In future, this facility is expected to host US and Israeli forces. The main US air base in the region, Camp Lemonnier, is in Djibouti. Several officials and analysts, including Rashid Abdi, a regional expert based in Kenya, said Washington was "scouting for territory" for an alternative base in Somaliland. But it is unlikely the US would pack up and leave Camp Lemonnier because it would mean ceding total control of Djibouti to China. Mr. Abdi says: "This is a grand strategic game as Washington tries to contain China in the Red Sea. Hormuz has underlined the importance of waterways. Washington is debating recognizing Somaliland to prevent the Bab al-Mandab strait from falling under Beijing's control. Political hawks like Ted Cruz are pushing hard for recognition." Israel became the first UN member state to recognize its independence and sovereignty formally in December. Yet when Israel recognized Somaliland, Britain was one of its most vociferous critics, strongly affirming London's support for Somalia. Hargeisa reacted with fury. Mr. Abdi says: "It almost caused riots on the streets. The most Anglophile people in Africa were being stabbed in the back. It was a real blow for them."

Continue on page 6

Central Bank of Somaliland.....



Mohamoud Walaaleye
The Deputy Governor of the Bank of Somaliland, Mr. Hamza Abdirahman Khayre, is representing the central bank at the ACCIS 2026 Conference currently being held in Vienna, Austria. This prominent international event gathers global leaders and experts specializing in credit data, open finance, financial technology, and modern financial service innovations. The Central Bank of Somaliland—with technical support from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) and local

financial institutions—is currently implementing Somaliland's first-ever Credit Information System and Public Credit Registry. Participation in this conference is a vital step in modernizing Somaliland's financial sector. It provides a unique opportunity to leverage global expertise and establish strategic partnerships with leading international financial and data organizations, such as Equifax and Mastercard. The Bank of Somaliland aims to utilize these insights and collaborations to advance local fintech, expand access to financial services, and strengthen nationwide financial inclusion.

Somaliland's Embassy Strategy:.....



Ambassador Hon. Bashir Goth, has described the 35th anniversary of Somaliland's independence on May 18 as a truly historic moment that has propelled the nation toward greater international recognition and respect. In a powerful address marking the occasion, Ambassador Goth praised the extraordinary endurance of the Somaliland people, who have spent more than three decades navigating severe economic hardships and global isolation with remarkable patience and determination. "The people of Somaliland have shown patience and steadfastness over a long period, overcoming difficult circumstances and international isolation," he said. "This resilience has earned Somaliland the position of a country that is now highly respected around the world." Amb. Goth emphasized that the steadfastness displayed by Somalilanders has finally borne fruit, positioning the nation at a stage where the international community is increasingly taking notice of its achievements and stability in a volatile region.

The Ambassador also highlighted a groundbreaking development in Somaliland's diplomatic journey: its emerging ties with Israel. He described the relationship as "a new door" that has opened for Somaliland, promising fresh diplomatic avenues and broader international opportunities. On the topic of embassy openings, which has sparked public discussion, Ambassador Goth clarified that the decision rests entirely with partner nations under standard international norms. "I have been hearing discussions about where Somaliland will open its embassy. This matter depends on the country with which we are establishing relations, because every country decides for itself its capital and the location where embassies will operate," he explained. The 35th anniversary celebrations come at a pivotal time for Somaliland, as the Horn of Africa nation continues to push for full international recognition while building strategic partnerships that could reshape its future on the global stage.

Buried Histories, Living Peace:.....

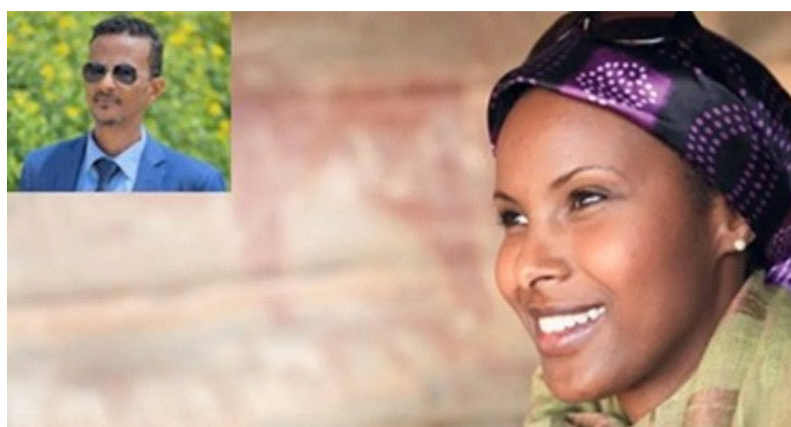
fieldwork across the Horn of Africa. Drawing upon empirical evidence from rock art sites, sacred landscapes, and medieval settlements in Somaliland and Ethiopia, this research demonstrates that sustainable peace constitutes a materially inscribed, ritually reinforced system of governance with deep historical roots. The article introduces two original theoretical frameworks—the Knowledge-Centered Approach and the Ritual Set methodology—and evaluates their implications for heritage studies, post-colonial archaeology, and international peace-building policy. The National Geographic Society-funded NAGI project (2023–present) represents the first systematic archaeological initiative dedicated exclusively to documenting ancient peace practices globally.

Keywords: Archaeology of Peace; indigenous heritage management; sacred landscapes; post-colonial archaeology; Somaliland; Horn of Africa; conflict archaeology; traditional governance; Knowledge-Centered Approach; Ritual Set

1. Introduction: Toward an Archaeology of Sustainable Peace

The archaeological investigation of conflict has produced robust subfields including battlefield archaeology, genocide studies, and heritage destruction analysis. However, the systematic study of peace as a material practice, governance structure, and ideological system remained theoretically underdeveloped until Dr. Sada Mire’s intervention. This article argues that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a prerequisite for sacred fertility—understood as the growth of humans, animals, crops, and social relations—requiring specific material conditions, ritual performances, and landscape inscriptions.

The theoretical innovations presented here emerge from Mire’s positionality as a Somali-Swedish scholar operating at the intersection of Western academic traditions and indigenous knowledge systems. Born in Hargeisa in 1976 and raised in Mogadishu, Mire experienced the collapse of the Somali state firsthand, including the killing of her father, a senior police official, during ethnic cleansing in 1989. Following civil war eruption in 1991, Mire gained asylum in Sweden as a teenager before completing doctoral training at University College London (Mire 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011a). This



personal history of displacement and return informs the epistemological commitment to understanding how the Horn of Africa maintained peace for 400 years before descending into four decades of conflict—and what the deep past can teach contemporary peace-building efforts.

The article is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the Knowledge-Centered Approach and the Ritual Set methodology; Section 3 examines sacred landscapes and the materiality of peace through case studies; Section 4 details the NAGI project and National Geographic sponsorship; Section 5 analyzes rock art evidence; Section 6 discusses indigenous governance systems; Section 7 addresses policy implications; and Section 8 concludes with future directions for the Archaeology of Peace.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

2.1 The Knowledge-Centered Approach: Decolonizing Heritage Methodology

The Knowledge-Centered Approach was first articulated in Mire (2007a), “Preserving Knowledge, not Objects: A Somali Perspective for Heritage Management and Archaeological Research” (*African Archaeological Review* 24(3-4): 49-71). This framework argues that “objects and monuments are not necessarily important but knowledge, skill and memory as practiced and symbolized in the landscapes” constitute the primary heritage resource (Mire 2007a: 49).

Previous archaeological interventions in Somalia failed precisely because they “lacked dialogue and incorporation of local views of heritage practice” (Mire 2011a: 71). The colonial legacy of European archaeological practice—characterized by extractive data collection and the removal of material culture to metropolitan museums—created conditions wherein “archaeology is viewed by many Somalis as a distant, foreign phenomenon” (Mire 2011a: 73). The Knowledge-Centered Approach addresses this epistemological rupture by centering oral tradition, practiced memory, and landscape

symbolism as primary archaeological data. This framework proves particularly salient for studying peace, which in Somali and broader Cushitic traditions operates through performed consensus rather than codified law. The methodology enables recovery of peace-making practices that leave minimal material trace in conventional archaeological terms but constitute rich data when analyzed through indigenous epistemological frameworks (Mire 2015a, 2015b).

2.2 The Ritual Set: A Methodological Framework for Recovering Peace

In Mire (2020), <https://www.routledge.com/Divine-Fertility-The-Continuity-in-Transformation-of-an-Ideology-of-Sacred-Kinship-in-Northeast-Africa/Mire/p/book/9781032174853> (Routledge), the Ritual Set was introduced as “a set of material and non-material manifestations and attributes which uses specific examples to shed light on the investigation and (re)interpretation of archaeological material and sites in the region” (Mire 2020: 15). The Ritual Set identifies specific spaces of consensus and ritual peace-making: sacred enclosures, specific tree species (particularly *Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*), springs, and mountain peaks where communities historically gathered to resolve conflicts, seal inter-clan alliances, and perform fertility rites that reinforced social bonds. This framework enables archaeologists to move beyond identification of conflict markers (weaponry, defensive architecture, trauma patterns) to recognize the material signatures of sustained peace governance—including ritual architecture, votive deposits, and landscape modifications that facilitate communal gathering and consensus-building.

The Ritual Set methodology integrates archaeological survey, ethnographic observation, historical textual analysis, historical linguistics, ethnobotany, and archaeozoology (Mire 2020). This interdisciplinary approach allows movement beyond narrow

national or conflict-centered narratives to interpret shared regional heritage as an indigenous Archaeology of Peace.

3. Sacred Landscapes and the Materiality of Peace

3.1 The Nagi/Nagaa Concept: Indigenous Peace Ideology

Central to the Archaeology of Peace is the indigenous Somali concept of nagi/nagaa—a complex term denoting peace, prosperity, and sacred fertility that operates as both descriptive condition and prescriptive ideology. Ethnographic and archaeological research demonstrates that this concept has underpinned state formation in the Horn of Africa for approximately 3,000 years, transforming across religious transitions (pre-Christian indigenous beliefs, Christianity, Islam) while maintaining core social function (Mire 2020).

The nagi/nagaa ideology posits peace as prerequisite for fertility—understood not merely as human reproduction but as the growth of animals, crops, and social relations. This conceptual framework explains the co-occurrence of peace-making rituals and fertility ceremonies at archaeological sites across Ethiopia and Somaliland. Documentation of sacred landscapes, enclosures, water sources, and trees reveals their dual function as sites of both agricultural fertility rituals and conflict resolution mechanisms (Mire 2015a, 2015b, 2020).

3.2 Case Study: Aw-Barkhadle and Multi-Religious Peace Architecture

Archaeological investigation of Aw-Barkhadle (Mire 2015a) provides empirical demonstration of the Archaeology of Peace’s analytical power. This 4 km² site, identified as the potential lost first capital of the Awdal kingdom (a medieval Islamic empire), exhibits remarkable multi-religious complexity: pre-Islamic phallic stones, Christian graves marked with Orthodox crosses, and Islamic mausoleums coexist within a single sacred landscape. Critically, survey revealed gravestones marked with Coptic crosses and Stars of David, indicating the presence of Christians and Jews alongside Muslims in this pilgrimage center (Mire 2015a: 102). This ecumenical materiality challenges modern narratives of religious division in the Horn of Africa and demonstrates how the site functioned as a space of interfaith peace-making for centuries. The 3 km town wall, mosque foundations, and surrounding burials (13th–19th

centuries AD) indicate sustained investment in a sacred landscape facilitating cross-community consensus.

The mausoleum of Saint Aw-Barkhadle, completed in the 19th century, is surrounded by dozens of white-washed tombs belonging to various figures. According to historical chronicles, the saint appears in kinglists of the Walasma dynasty of Ifat and Adal, and the site served as burial place for Garaad Jibril, who revolted against Harar’s ruler Sultan ‘Uthman in the 16th century (Mire 2015a). Philipp Paulitschke’s 1888 account identified the capital of Adal as “AwBerkele,” suggesting the walled settlement functioned as capital of Ifat and Adal at the end of the Middle Ages.

The site’s sacred landscape includes a mountain, trees, stones, and wells associated with deities, most prominently the sky God Waaq, connecting pre-Islamic and Islamic traditions through myths, legends, and ancestor worship (Mire 2015a). This continuity demonstrates how the ideology of peace adapted across religious transformations while maintaining core social function.

4. The NAGI Project and National Geographic Sponsorship

4.1 Project Design and Theoretical Objectives

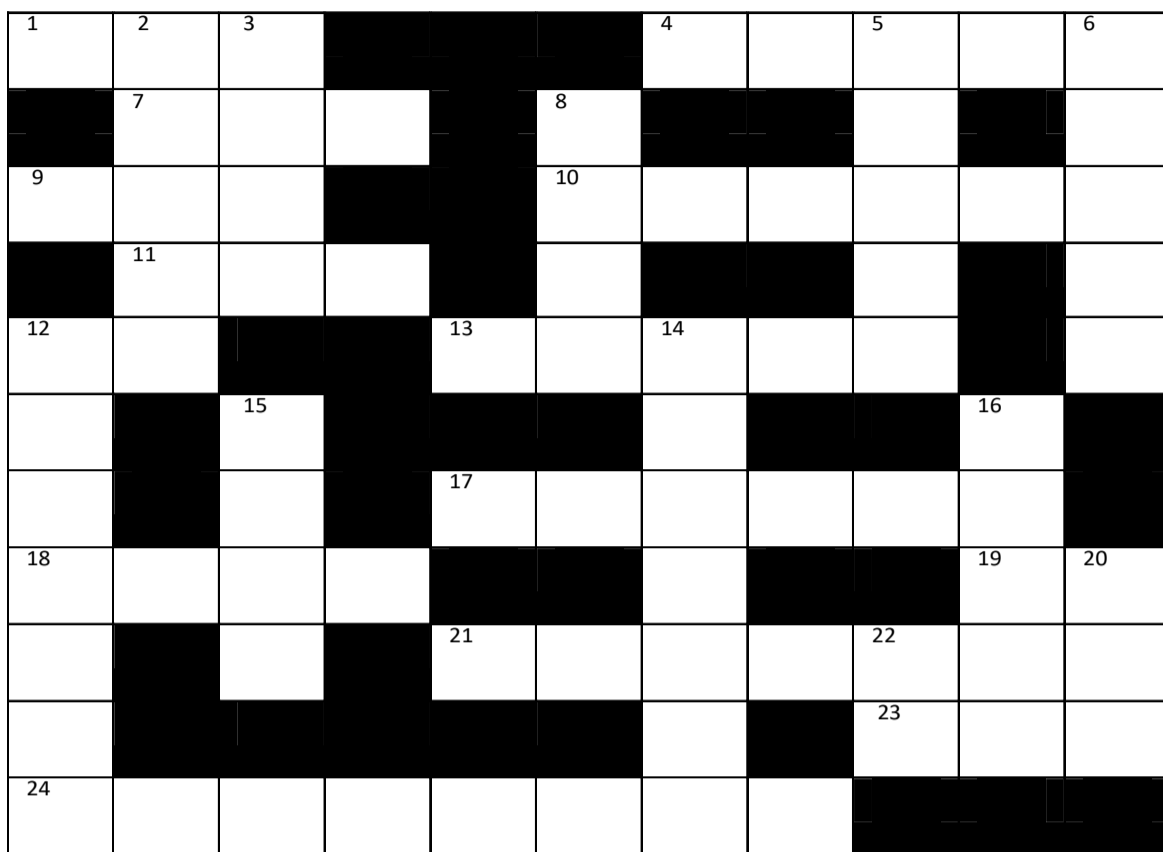
In May 2023, the National Geographic Society awarded Dr. Mire the Wayfinder Award, providing institutional support for expansion of research under the project designation NAGI: Exploring the Forgotten Heritage of Peace-Making in the War-Torn Horn of Africa (National Geographic Explorer Profile). This project represents the first globally recognized archaeological initiative “solely dedicated to the documentation and understanding of the ancient peace practices in Africa and beyond” (Somaliland Sun 2023). The NAGI project employs cultural heritage and archaeology as departure points to address contemporary global issues of war and famine, utilizing “cultural notions of peace- and fertility-making and their manifestations as a base for its data” (Mire 2020: 18). The project’s interdisciplinary methodology integrates archaeological survey, ethnographic observation, historical textual analysis, historical linguistics, ethnobotany, and archaeozoology to reconstruct long-term institutional frameworks that maintained regional stability.

4.2 Digital Heritage and Public Archaeology Components

Continue on page 7

THT Puzzle

Prepared by: Abdillahi Said Muhummed



ACROSS

- 1 Snow
- 4 gases
- 7 opposite of in
- 9 us
- 10 urges
- 11 today
- 12 computer science
- 13 Dark
- 17 kingdom
- 18 debates
- 19 By way of
- 21 hard live
- 23 joined
- 24 school in

DOWN

- 2 count up
- 3 European
- 5 say
- 6 mindless
- 8 baseball game
- 12 moment
- 14 relieve table
- 15 fence, garden wall
- 16 establish, fixup

Previous Answer

A ¹	R	E ²		C ³	A ⁴	P ⁵		R ⁶		U ⁷	
S		N ⁸	A	R	R	A	T	I	V	E ⁹	S
K		S		Y ¹⁰	E	S		S		A	
		U			A ¹¹	S	S	I	S ¹²	T	S ¹³
C ¹⁴	A ¹⁵	R	E ¹⁶			E		N ¹⁷	O		U
	R ¹⁸	E	A	S	O	N		G ¹⁹	O		N
G ²⁰	O		S			G ²¹	O		N		
	U		Y		B ²²	E		O ²³		I ²⁴	S ²⁵
A ²⁶	N	D		A ²⁷	R	R	O ²⁸	W	S		E
	D		R ²⁹	A			U ³⁰	N		B ³¹	E
N ³²		J ³³	U	N	I	O	R			E	
O ³⁴	N		G		N		S ³⁵	A	I	D	

Why Britain Risks Missing.....

Recently, Somaliland's British friends were appalled when it was reported that it had supported Argentina's claim on the Falkland Islands.

Fake news, insists the president, spread by social media propagandists.

Mr. Abdullahi says: "We reject that totally. We have no relationship with Argentina. We back Britain's ownership of the Falklands."

Britain colonized Somaliland in 1844 (mainly for the sake of its strategic sea lanes, which offered an advantage over Imperial France). Somalilanders fought under the Union flag in both world wars, including in the Somaliland Camel Corps.

The territory remained a British protectorate until 1960, when it was granted independence. Neighbouring Somalia was freed from Italian control at the same time.

Five days later, the two chose to unify, but Somalilanders chafed under Mogadishu's repressive regime. Throughout the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Somalilanders were killed and many fled to Britain, settling in London, Birmingham, Cardiff and other cities.

In 1991, Somaliland successfully re-established itself as a separate state. The devoutly Sunni Muslim enclave, where alcohol is forbidden and the hijab ubiquitous, then embraced Western-friendly democracy – and became the only jurisdiction on Earth to combat election fraud with iris scanners.

It is by no means a democratic utopia, though, with female genital mutilation (now being curtailed), clan discrimination (also being rogued out) and appropriate Islamic law incorporated into the state. Across the border, Somalia, which is at the top of the world fragile states index, descended into corruption and jihadi chaos. But the international community remained wedded to the status quo ante. Deprived of international recognition, Somaliland, with its population of six million people, remains locked out of the global financial system, unable to take out sovereign loans, issue bonds or receive support from the International Monetary Fund or World Bank.

This severely restricts its infrastructure financing, currency stabilization, long-term development projects and access to cheap capital.

By contrast, Somalia – huge swathes of which are controlled by the al-Qaeda affiliate al-Shabaab – enjoys lavish British support. Its government has strong Islamist links; its prime minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, supports Hamas and has referred to Jewish people as "children of pigs and dogs".

China, Turkey and Qatar are among Somalia's allies. Yet eye-watering amounts of British aid money have poured into Mogadishu, despite suspicions it has lined pockets and funded terrorism. This year alone, £61m of taxpayers' cash has been transferred, with very little trickling down to Somaliland.

Israel's friendship with Somaliland is not new. Israel was the only state to condemn the atrocities of the 1980s at the UN Security Council.

Given Israel's recent reputational damage, the alliance has had a chilling effect on some of Somaliland's other relationships. Yet Mr. Abdullahi remains undaunted, unafraid to pin his country's colours to the mast.

He says: "From the beginning, our relationship has been open, frank and friendly. Those criticizing us should mind their own business. I will make an official visit to Jerusalem this year."

This week, 50 Somaliland special forces troops returned from training in Tel Aviv, The Telegraph has learnt. At a ceremony in Hargeisa on Tuesday, an Israeli delegation presented the president with a fragment of an Iron Dome missile interceptor – a symbol of Jerusalem's protection.

Israel's move has opened the door for other nations to follow suit. Possible suitors include democracies facing tyrants of their own, such as Taiwan, which has close ties with Somaliland. Speculation that the UAE would offer recognition this week proved unfounded, though officials in Hargeisa remained confident it was just a matter of timing.

Britain's stance was set in 2012, when Lord Cameron, the then prime minister, convened a London conference that ended by backing a unified Somalia. This position has hardened under Labour. According to Omar Mahmood, a senior Horn of Africa analyst at the International Crisis Group, such strategic ambiguity shows diplomatic wisdom.

He says: "There's no need to choose a side. From a security perspective, Britain has interests both in Somalia, which is threatened by al-Shabaab, and Somaliland. It makes sense to maintain both relationships, as recognition would aggravate Somalia and incur a diplomatic cost."

There are fears that recognizing Hargeisa's sovereignty would open a Pandora's Box of entitlements and grudges across the region. Somalia might be prompted to assert its quiet historic claim to parts of northern Kenya and Ethiopia, while the nationalistic Somali region of Puntland, which holds territory in Somaliland, could respond with open warfare.

In addition, Whitehall worries that clunking British intervention could inflame old colonial resentments. Britain could end up at loggerheads with the African Union, a collection of mainly authoritarian regimes with delicate territorial tensions of their own.

Sir Gavin Williamson, a former UK defense secretary, who leads Somaliland's new international recognition campaign institute, and travelled to Hargeisa to mark Somaliland's 35 years of self-rule this week, brushes this aside.

He says: "Colonial guilt and a slavish adherence to meaningless international law are now the key drivers of Britain's foreign policy, as opposed to making a difference to the security and prosperity of people on ground and our national interest."

"We are too frightened of our history to show any leadership, so players such as China and Turkey step into the vacuum, using the Horn of Africa as their playground. Malign actors now rule the roost. This colonial guilt and postcolonial inability to lead isn't helping anyone. East Africans want us to lead, but there's no leadership there."

The former colonial power, he adds, had always vowed to be the second country to recognize Somaliland – once another state had paved the way. "It was just a lie," says Sir Gavin. "This is reaching a point of deep embarrassment."

Buried Histories, Living Peace:.....

The National Geographic sponsorship enables significant public-facing outputs, including a digital exhibition on the Archaeology of Peace and a documentary film produced as part of the Wayfinder grant. These outputs translate academic research into accessible formats designed to influence contemporary policy discussions on conflict resolution and peace-building.

Concurrently, the Horn Heritage Foundation—founded by Mire in 2011 with offices in Hargeisa and The Hague—conducts systematic digital documentation of endangered sites. The Foundation's drone archaeology program and 3D photogrammetry initiatives have created "the digital recording and 3D virtual tours of Somaliland rock art sites" and "the survey and documentation of Medieval Islamic kingdoms and sacred landscapes, including the drone archaeology of Aw-Barkhadle, capital of Adal Kingdom" (Horn Heritage Foundation).

These technologies serve dual functions: creating permanent archives of fragile sites threatened by erosion, development, and conflict; and democratizing access to heritage for Somali diaspora communities and global audiences. The Foundation has trained over 1,000 Somali students across the Somali region and globally, contributed to development of Somaliland's National Heritage Act, and created the Horn Heritage Digital Museum.

5. Rock Art and Ritual Peace-Making: Empirical Case Studies

5.1 Laas Geel: Deciphering Five Millennia of Peace Symbolism

Mire's award-winning work on the Laas Geel rock art complex (ca. 5,000 years BP) demonstrates the Archaeology of Peace's interpretive capacity. The polychrome paintings—among the best-preserved in Africa—depict large votive cows with decorated necks and prominent udders, human figures with arms outstretched in ceremonial poses, and geometric patterns indicating ritual activity.

Interpretation moves beyond conventional pastoralist readings to identify these images as evidence of peace rituals—ceremonies where communities gathered at sacred water sources to perform fertility rites that reinforced social bonds and conflict resolution mechanisms. The standardized human figures, the site's location at seasonal river confluences, and the symbolic emphasis on cattle fertility (directly linked to social

wealth and inter-clan alliance networks in pastoralist societies) all point to a sophisticated ritual landscape where peace was actively performed and materially inscribed.

The Laas Geel shelters, translating to "The Camels' Well" in Somali, consist of about twenty shelters of varying size, with the largest approximately 10 m long and 5 m deep. The paintings are excellently preserved thanks to their location under granite overhangs. The site is essential to the Horn of Africa's historical and heritage legacy and is considered a potential World Heritage Site candidate (Horn Heritage Foundation).

5.2 Dhambalin: Archaeological Evidence of Ritual Continuity

The Dhambalin rock shelter, discovered in autumn 2007 and documented in Mire (2008), provides further empirical support for the Archaeology of Peace framework. The site's polychrome paintings (ca. 5,000 years BP) include the first sheep depictions in Somali archaeology—fourteen animals with red and white coloring lacking the black heads characteristic of modern Somali breeds—suggesting ancient domesticated varieties and long-term pastoral stability (Mire 2008: 158).

Of particular significance for peace archaeology are the human figures: hunters with bows and arrows wearing headgear, accompanied by dogs; a figure sitting on an animal with raised hands interpreted as worshipping cattle; and two clearly male figures with arms outstretched in ceremonial poses (Mire 2008: 160). These outstretched arms echo the ritual poses at Laas Geel, suggesting continuity of peace-making gestures across millennia. The "conspicuous bands drawn on the backs and bellies of cows" attest to ritual decoration associated with fertility and peace ceremonies (Mire 2008: 161).

UNESCO's Chief of Africa, Lazare Eloundou Assomo, recognized the site's significance in 2011, and it was subsequently added to the UNESCO World Heritage tentative list (Mire 2008). The site holds extraordinary originality and is essential to understanding the region's ritual practices.

6. The Wagar and Sacred Trees: Material Culture of Fertility and Peace

Mire (2015a) presents the first academic study of the wagar—a sacred wooden sculpture kept by Somali women and used as a medium in fertility and peace

rituals. This research demonstrates the wagar's significance as a "Cushitic symbol of belief in sacred trees within Somali society" and explores its potential link to the Sky-God Waaq—adhered to by Cushitic peoples both before and during the practice of Christianity and Islam (Mire 2015a: 93).

Mire's personal connection to the wagar—having inherited one from her maternal grandmother—exemplifies the Knowledge-Centered Approach in practice, bridging academic research with indigenous knowledge transmission. Mire and collaborators climbed Somaliland's Golis Mountains to collect wagar tree branches, connecting ancient practice with living tradition and demonstrating that the Archaeology of Peace investigates not merely past artifacts but ongoing material relationships between communities and sacred landscapes.

The wagar study contributes to the archaeology of religion and historical archaeology in the Horn of Africa, demonstrating how indigenous technologies—including iron and pottery, traditional medicine and surgery, architecture and art—are maintained by custodians who are often the most marginalized in the region (Horn Heritage Foundation).

7. Indigenous Governance Systems: The Archaeological Recovery of Xeer

The Archaeology of Peace extends beyond ritual sites to excavate the material foundations of Xeer—the Somali customary law system representing one of humanity's most enduring conflict resolution mechanisms. Xeer operates as a culturally defined system of folklore and habits, orally transmitted across generations, based on consensus between entitled groups.

The system's core principles include inter-clan conventions on protection and security, family obligations, and resource-utilization rules regarding water, pasture, and natural resources. Mediation (masalaxo) and arbitration (gar dawo) operate through clan elders (xeer begti), with restorative rather than punitive outcomes: "Somalis who apply xeer are not so much interested in establishing the suspect's guilt or innocence—it is important to reach consensus (win-win situation)." All participants must abandon the dispute without "losing face," and the sense of adequacy of sanction being an inconvenience for the whole clan

reinforces collective responsibility.

Archaeological documentation reveals that the sacred enclosures, water sources, and trees identified in this research were not merely spiritual sites but the physical infrastructure of the Xeer system—places where disputes were resolved, alliances sealed, and collective responsibility ritually reinforced. The compensation system (mag-diye), where damages are paid in camels to avoid blood revenge, finds its material origins in these sacred landscapes where fertility and peace were understood as inseparable conditions for social reproduction (Mire 2020).

8. Policy Implications: Challenging International Humanitarian Law

The Archaeology of Peace carries profound implications for contemporary global policy. Mire argues that current International Humanitarian Law and global treaties have proven unsuccessful in protecting humanity from continuing wars, proposing that lessons from the deep past and traditional governance systems can "raise global awareness and impact policy in peace-making, conflict resolution and reconciliation" (Mire 2020: 22).

The 2018 Hague Talk, "You want world peace? Revise the History Books!", articulated the central thesis that "understanding beyond the labels of Christianity and Islam reveals a deeper history connecting people in the Horn of Africa"—an "archaeology of cohesion" capable of addressing current narratives of division. The 2020 British Academy Global Perspectives lecture extended this argument to the global political atmosphere, where "even the most powerful democracies of the world are in crisis" (Mire 2020).

The assertion that cultural heritage constitutes a basic human need—articulated in the 2011 New Scientist article and 2014 TED Talk (Mire 2014)—challenges the humanitarian sector's hierarchical ordering of needs. Mire (2016), "The Role of Cultural Heritage in the Basic Needs of East African Pastoralists" (African Study Monographs 53(Supplementary Issue): 147-157), provides the empirical foundation for this theoretical claim, demonstrating that "without the traditional skills and coping mechanisms that are inherent in the cultural values that glue people together, it is difficult for East African pastoralists to survive" (Mire 2016: 147).

9. Critical Assessment and Scholarly Reception

9.1 Academic Recognition

The theoretical contributions presented here have received substantial scholarly recognition. Mire (2020) won the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA) Book Prize in 2021, making Mire the first archaeologist of non-European descent to receive this award (SAfA 2021; Somaliland Sun 2023). The monograph was praised by Paul Lane as "a genuinely post-colonial approach toward heritage protection and conservation in the country and how best to mobilise knowledge and memory of Somalia's deep past for the greater benefit of current and future generations" (Lane 2020: 512).

In 2017, Mire was selected by the Hay Festival of Literature and Arts as one of 30 Global Writers and Thinkers for 2017-2027, and <https://www.newscientist.com/named-her-among-the-Most-Inspiring-Women-in-Science-of-All-Time> (National Geographic Explorer Profile).

9.2 Critical Engagements

Academic review of Divine Fertility has identified both strengths and areas requiring further development. A 2024 review in Geeska noted that while the critical perspective on the lack of indigenous scholarship and colonial legacies is "valuable," the approach "through an ethnic lens, particularly its use of the term 'Cushitic,' is problematic" in contexts of active ethnic tension such as contemporary Ethiopia. The reviewer further observed that the "reliance on ethnographic analogy as the basis for the 'Ritual Set' presents a challenge, as this method is difficult to apply consistently" across the diverse Ethiopian sites discussed (Tiya, Aksum, Lalibela, Sheikh Hussein).

These critiques highlight the methodological tensions inherent in developing indigenous archaeological frameworks while engaging with comparative regional analysis—a challenge addressed through insistence on locally appropriate theoretical frameworks integrated with rigorous interdisciplinary methodology.

Author: Gulaid Yusuf Idaan is a senior lecturer and independent scholar based in Hargeisa, Somaliland. His research focuses on international relations, political analysis, constitutional studies, and the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa.