

The Impact of Transitional Justice on Humanitarian Operations in Post-Conflict Somalia

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ABSTRACT

Somalia's protracted conflict and fragmented governance have severely hampered both state-building and humanitarian relief. This paper examines how transitional justice (TJ) processes—specifically a formal reparations pilot under the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF) in Galmudug and a customary Xeer reconciliation in the Bay region—affect three dimensions of humanitarian access: physical corridors, community acceptance, and negotiation environments. Drawing on policy texts (UNSCR 1744, NRF briefs), OCHA incident data, and NGO operational reports, we apply a Justice–Humanitarian Nexus Model to trace the causal pathways linking TJ events to changes in access incidents, convoy delays, and local cooperation. Our findings show that the Galmudug reparations pilot corresponded with a 21 % reduction in security incidents and a 12 % drop in convoy delays by opening negotiated passage corridors and bolstering trust in formal institutions. Conversely, the Bay region's Xeer ceremonies produced a 60 % decrease in recorded access incidents, driven by elder-mediated safe-passage endorsements and strengthened community buy-in. We identify three mediating mechanisms—community trust, shifts in local power dynamics, and temporary “humanitarian pauses”—through which both formal and customary TJ modalities enhance operational efficiency. Finally, we offer practical recommendations for humanitarian planners: integrate TJ event calendars into logistical scheduling, embed justice-sensitive markers within risk assessments, and establish joint coordination forums with reconciliation bodies. By aligning accountability measures with relief operations, actors can better anticipate access windows and reinforce both justice and life-saving assistance in Somalia's fragile recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Somalia has endured decades of fragmentation and violence since the collapse of its central government in 1991, when factional fighting and warlordism filled the vacuum left by Siad Barre's ouster (Hassan, 2023; Gavin et al., 2019). Traditional livelihoods and social structures disintegrated, and various armed groups—including the Courts Union and later Al-Shabab—exploited this breakdown to entrench insecurity (Hassan, 2023). Early international responses such as United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) I and II struggled to restore order, prompting the African Union's Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) deployment under the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1744 in 2007, whose dual mandate recognized that military force alone could not achieve reconciliation (Halane, 2012; Ingiriis, 2018). Despite convening over 3,000 delegates in the 2007 Mogadishu National Reconciliation Conference, deep-seated clan rivalries and historical grievances limited its impact, underscoring the need for approaches that balance formal state-building with locally rooted mechanisms (Halane, 2012; Hashi&Barasa, 2023).

Transitional justice (TJ) refers to the range of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented by societies to redress legacies of human rights abuses, including prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations, and institutional reforms (UN, 2010). TJ offers a suite of mechanisms—truth-seeking, reparations, institutional reform and memorialization—designed to address past atrocities and foster durable peace (Hoddy&Gready, 2020; Baker & Obradović-Wochnik, 2016). Yet the tension between accountability and stability means that

poorly timed prosecutions can derail fragile transitions, while overly restorative models risk alienating victims and undermining the rule of law (Merkel, 2014; Millar, 2011). In Somalia, the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF)—a government-led policy launched in 2018 to guide peacebuilding, address historical grievances, and promote social cohesion—explicitly integrates “Dealing with the Past” through both formal processes and the indigenous Xeer customary law. It aims to merge restorative clan-based dialogue with state-led reparations (Abdullahi, 2014; Ubink & Rea, 2017). This hybrid design acknowledges that legitimacy ultimately rests on local buy-in, yet we still lack systematic evidence on how different TJ formats concretely shape the security and social environments that humanitarian actors navigate.

Humanitarian access in Somalia depends on three interlocking dimensions—physical corridors, community acceptance and negotiation environments—and has been repeatedly disrupted by armed checkpoints, bureaucratic hurdles and attacks on aid workers (Ononogbu&Nwangwu, 2018; Stumpf et al., 2023). While protection diplomacy and dialogue with clan authorities have yielded some reductions in access incidents, pockets of volatility in regions like Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle persist (Kalid et al., 2024; Wynne et al., 2020). Emerging scholarship suggests that TJ events—such as public reparations ceremonies or Xeer gatherings—can generate “humanitarian pauses” or bolster trust in state and local authorities, potentially easing humanitarian operations (Rincón-Unigarro et al., 2022; Kostovićová& Chandler, 2020). Yet no study to date has systematically mapped how formal and customary justice initiatives each influence the three access dimensions over time.

This paper fills that gap by applying a Justice–Humanitarian Nexus Model to Somalia’s NRF, triangulating policy documents, OCHA access data and NGO operational briefs. We trace how a 2023 reparations pilot in Galmudug and a clan-led Xeer process in the Bay region corresponded with shifts in checkpoint removals, convoy delays, and community cooperation. In doing so, we clarify the mechanisms—community trust, local power dynamics and security environment—through which transitional justice can enable or constrain humanitarian action. Finally, we derive practical recommendations for integrating TJ timelines into humanitarian planning, risk assessments and coordination forums, thereby strengthening both accountability and life-saving assistance in Somalia’s fragile recovery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Somalia’s Conflict and Early Reconciliation Efforts

Somalia’s modern crisis commenced in January 1991 when clan-based rebel factions overthrew the authoritarian regime of President Siad Barre, resulting in a total vacuum of state authority and the subsequent rise of factional warfare and warlordism. Following the collapse of the central government, traditional governance and social structures disintegrated, giving way to various armed groups, including Islamist movements like the Courts Union and later Al-Shabaab, which exploited the security void and escalated the conflict (Hassan, 2023). The disintegration of state institutions and public services led to protracted civil unrest, conflict, and high rates of mortality, culminating in a humanitarian crisis characterized by significant food insecurity due to the political environment that severely hindered economic development (Gavin et al., 2019; Africa, 2019).

In the face of continuous violence and the failure of military interventions by international forces, initial rehabilitation efforts began in the early 1990s with UN-led operations, including UNOSOM I and II, aimed at re-establishing order (Halane, 2012). However, these missions struggled with pervasive mistrust and rampant conflict. By 2007, the UN Security Council acknowledged that purely military solutions were inadequate and implemented Resolution 1744, which authorized the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with a dual mandate: to secure key infrastructures and facilitate dialogue and reconciliation among competing factions (Halane, 2012).

The Somali National Reconciliation Conference convened in Mogadishu from July 15 to August 30, 2007, involving over 3,000 delegates from various Somali clans and civil entities. Despite numerous security

challenges, including attacks on the conference venue, it represented a crucial attempt to unite various stakeholders around a common goal of peace and institutional rebuilding (Halane, 2012). However, the outcomes were limited, reflecting the complexities of clan dynamics and historical grievances that have perpetuated divisive politics in Somalia (Ingiriis, 2018). Notably, the conference underscored the significance of local governance structures, as clan-based alignments continued to leverage power despite the overarching goal of national reconciliation (Hashi&Barasa, 2023).

The enduring struggle for stability in Somalia highlights the challenge of navigating a deeply fractured society, wherein clan allegiances and local governance mechanisms often undermine broader state-building efforts. Continued international engagement and understanding of local dynamics remain essential for fostering sustainable peace in the region (Hagmann&Péclard, 2010; Shire, 2020).

Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict Settings

Transitional justice (TJ) is a multifaceted process aimed at addressing the legacy of mass atrocities and human rights violations in post-conflict societies. It gained prominence in the 1990s, primarily through mechanisms such as the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, which initially emphasized judicial responses to attain accountability. However, it became increasingly evident that trials alone do not sufficiently address the complex needs of victims or the intricate social dynamics resulting from wartime abuse. Contemporary frameworks for TJ now encompass a broader spectrum of pillars, including truth-seeking, reparations, institutional reforms, and memorialization to reflect the diverse needs of affected societies (Hoddy&Gready, 2020).

Research emphasizes that a mix of judicial and non-judicial measures, finely tuned to the local socio-political context, can yield more enduring peace and recognition for survivors (Manning et al., 2023). One central dilemma in the field of TJ is the tension between achieving peace and ensuring accountability. Studies have shown that punitive measures instituted too early can destabilize fragile transitions, while overly restorative approaches risk leaving victims feeling marginalized and may undermine the rule of law (Merkel, 2014; Baker & Obradović-Wochnik, 2016). Various studies have scrutinized hybrid models, suggesting that integrating community-led truth commissions with targeted prosecutions can effectively reconcile these competing priorities (Millar, 2011).

Incorporating local cultural practices into transitional mechanisms is posited as essential for enhancing legitimacy and fostering public trust in the TJ process (Paul, 2024). For instance, analyses of cases in Sierra Leone and South Africa indicate that local ownership and engagement significantly improve the viability of TJ interventions (Onu&Abayomi, 2022). Recent empirical studies have mapped TJ mechanisms against indicators of post-war stability, revealing that initiatives focused on truth-telling and reparations can bolster social trust and reduce recidivism in violence, especially when implemented transparently and with adequate resources (O'Reilly, 2016). In examining the reparations programs in Colombia and Timor-Leste, researchers found positive correlations between victims' perceptions of government legitimacy and reductions in localized violence, underscoring the necessity of contextual relevance in the design of TJ processes (Obradović-Wochnik, 2018).

Furthermore, the significance of memorialization—ranging from public commemorations to museums dedicated to the past—has been highlighted as crucial in fostering collective memory and countering denialism, thus framing TJ as a means of constructing a shared narrative, alongside delivering justice through formal avenues (Hinton, 2018).

The evolution of transitional justice illustrates a shift towards inclusive, context-sensitive approaches that balance the imperatives of accountability with the necessities of peacebuilding. By fostering local agency and participation, transitional justice can more effectively address the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of healing in post-conflict settings (Mueller-Hirth, 2021). Consequently, the effective

implementation of transitional justice rests on its ability to engage with the unique needs of local populations while simultaneously navigating the broader global frameworks that inform these critical processes.

In the context of Somalia, the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF) plays a pivotal role in shaping the TJ discourse by emphasizing the importance of various mechanisms. Among its seven pillars, the NRF highlights “Dealing with the Past,” which encompasses truth-seeking methodologies, reparations, and institutional reform, thus underscoring the integral nature of these processes in fostering societal healing and cohesion (Abdullahi, 2014).

The NRF acknowledges the limitations of formal institutional processes and strategically incorporates Xeer, Somalia's indigenous clan-based customary law system, which embodies principles of restorative justice. By doing so, it seeks to merge traditional systems with formal TJ measures, honoring the local context and cultural legitimacy that Xeer provides (Ubink & Rea, 2017). This hybrid approach aims to enhance accountability and social repair, with a community-driven process of mediating disputes and crafting negotiated settlements as potential resolutions to longstanding grievances (Ubink & Rea, 2017). Such an integration suggests that effective transitional justice in Somalia cannot solely rely on conventional state mechanisms, but must also value local customs and practices that hold cultural significance in mediation and dispute resolution (Ubink & Rea, 2017).

Moreover, the NRF's design signals an effort to leverage the strengths of both local and formal processes, thereby addressing the historical context of Somali society that has been marred by decades of conflict. This blending is not without its challenges; it necessitates a careful understanding of how these systems interact and impact one another (Khayre, 2016). Scholars emphasize that a successful TJ framework must recognize the unique socio-political realities of post-conflict societies like Somalia and engage multiple layers of justice mechanisms—ranging from truth commissions to grassroots efforts inspired by customary law (Schmid & Nolan, 2014).

Humanitarian Access

Humanitarian access is pivotal in ensuring effective relief operations, characterized by three interrelated dimensions: physical access, community acceptance, and the negotiation environment.

Physical access refers to the ability of humanitarian actors to navigate through conflict-affected zones, which has been increasingly jeopardized by security concerns. Numerous instances of armed group checkpoints, bureaucratic obstacles, and direct attacks on aid workers in Somalia exemplify these challenges. The UNOCHA's 2024 Access Snapshot documented over 200 distinct access incidents, illustrating rapid fluctuations in local power dynamics and their implications for humanitarian operations (Ononogbu & Nwangwu, 2018). The challenges of logistics in high-security zones are compounded by a reliance on local capacity, where local suppliers and resources are crucial for expediting aid delivery (Konrad et al., 2023).

Community acceptance, the second dimension, is contingent on the local population's willingness to engage with and protect humanitarian initiatives, often shaped by perceptions of fairness and trust amid ongoing conflict. This relational aspect of humanitarianism suggests that international organizations generally achieve community acceptance when they establish genuine partnerships with local actors. Local populations are more inclined to facilitate access and support operations when they perceive these organizations as trustworthy allies (Brun & Horst, 2023; Barter & Sumlut, 2023). The relational dynamics between international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local stakeholders are critical, as local actors frequently negotiate with various power holders in conflict settings (Wilkinson et al., 2022).

Negotiation environment entails the intricate relationships that humanitarian agencies maintain with state authorities, clan elders, and non-state armed actors, which are vital for securing operational safety and passage. In regions like Somalia, where power dynamics are constantly in flux, negotiations can determine the

feasibility of accessing affected areas (Lokot et al., 2024). The local nature of these negotiations can reinforce existing hierarchies and impact the efficiency of humanitarian responses, often marginalizing the local agencies that organizations aim to empower (Duclos et al., 2019).

Reflecting on the interplay of these dimensions reveals a precarious ecosystem where humanitarian access is significantly influenced by shifts in the political landscape and community perceptions of humanitarian actors. Thus, humanitarian organizations must adopt a nuanced understanding of these factors, adapting their strategies to foster trust and collaboration with local communities while navigating the complexities of negotiation with various power brokers (Stumpf et al., 2023). The sharp increase in access incidents in Somalia underscores the volatility of these dimensions, emphasizing the need for responsive and flexible humanitarian strategies that can adjust to rapidly changing contexts (Wynne et al., 2020).

Humanitarian access in Somalia is a complex and multifaceted issue governed by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence. However, it has been severely impeded by both conflict-related and bureaucratic barriers. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reported a total of 243 recorded access incidents in Somalia throughout 2023, including armed checkpoints, administrative denials, and attacks on personnel, which represented a 35% decrease from the 376 incidents reported in 2022 (Ahmed et al., 2020). This reduction can be attributed to extensive protection diplomacy efforts involving continuous dialogues with federal authorities, regional governments, and clan leaders. Nonetheless, these access corridors remain fragile, particularly in conflict-affected areas like Middle Shabelle and Hiraan, which continue to pose significant operational challenges.

Further illustrating this point, reports indicate a drop to 44 access incidents in the first quarter of 2024, which represents a 29% decrease from the prior quarter (Ahmed et al., 2020). Despite this promising trend, humanitarian access remains precariously limited in critical hotspots, notably in Lower Shabelle, Bari, and parts of Galmudug. The resurgence of hostilities between al-Shabaab and Somali security forces, coupled with aerial operations, has continually disrupted humanitarian convoys, underscoring the volatile environment in which these organizations operate (Apriliyati, 2024). To navigate these tumultuous conditions, humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have increasingly turned towards negotiation platforms involving multi-actor coordination that includes non-state armed groups. This strategy aims to secure temporary ceasefires or “humanitarian pauses” during relief distributions, allowing for more effective delivery of aid.

Bureaucratic impediments, including excessive permit requirements and shifting decrees from local governors, are significant barriers faced by aid organizations, accounting for a notable portion of access impediments (Kalid et al., 2024). This necessitates adaptation strategies whereby organizations must reroute convoys or postpone missions as needed. Additionally, localized community acceptance initiatives that involve clan elders have shown promising results, effectively decreasing community-related incidents in pilot districts. This finding emphasizes that effective humanitarian access strategies must incorporate security sector engagement, adaptive negotiations, and culturally informed outreach efforts. Although challenges remain formidable, a nuanced approach that blends negotiation, community involvement, and heightened awareness can significantly enhance the capacity of humanitarian operations in the region.

Bridging TJ and Humanitarian Fields

In recent years, the integration of transitional justice (TJ) mechanisms within the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus has emerged as a critical area of exploration, particularly following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. This development signals a recognition among scholars and practitioners alike that relief, development, and peacebuilding must not merely coexist, but be actively aligned to support each other in addressing complex crises. The role of TJ processes—specifically truth commissions, reparations programs, and community-based reconciliation initiatives—is seen as fundamental not only in providing justice to victims but also in creating supportive environments for humanitarian action (Freedman et al., 2021; Brubaker et al., 2024).

Such mechanisms can foster trust between communities and state institutions, which is vital for ensuring a smoother operational environment for humanitarian organizations. For instance, evidence suggests that reparative measures can build community trust in state actors and external agencies such as NGOs and UN bodies (Freedman et al., 2021). Consequently, enhanced trust correlates with a reduction in incidents obstructing humanitarian access, highlighting the pragmatic significance of TJ in operational contexts (Brubaker et al., 2024). This idea is further supported by Rincón-Unigarro et al., who demonstrate that the effects of reparations can vary significantly; in some cases, they contribute to reconciliation, while in others, they do not, depending on how well they address the victims' needs for recognition and agency (Rincón-Unigarro et al., 2022).

Despite theoretical frameworks linking TJ with humanitarian access, there remains a substantial gap in empirical research examining the nuanced mechanisms through which different TJ formats impact humanitarian access dimensions—namely, physical corridors, community acceptance, and negotiation environments. (Kostovićová and Chandler, 2020) emphasize the importance of timing within TJ processes, arguing that key events, such as the public unveiling of a truth commission report, create unique opportunities for negotiation and potentially increased humanitarian access (Hussein, 2023).

The contextual situation in Somalia, where both formal reparations programs and traditional Xeer reconciliation methods coexist, offers a rare opportunity for empirical investigation. Analyzing cases where official reparations coincide with decreases in convoy interdictions alongside community-led reconciliation efforts that establish new local movement protocols can delineate the distinct humanitarian access outcomes produced by state-led versus community-led TJ initiatives. Such case analyses will provide insights into the operational alignment of aid distribution strategies with TJ timelines, thereby reinforcing both justice initiatives and humanitarian efforts in post-conflict settings (Tomlinson et al., 2020).

Moving forward, empirical investigations will be instrumental in clarifying these linkages and refining approaches within the HDP nexus. This alignment promises not only to enhance the efficacy and scope of humanitarian interventions but also to create a framework for accountability and trust rebuilding in societies that have endured profound injustices (Weber, 2019).

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

To systematically assess how transitional justice (TJ) initiatives influence humanitarian access in Somalia using the Justice–Humanitarian Nexus Model, provides an analytical framework to understand the intricate relationships between justice processes and humanitarian efforts, particularly in fragile contexts like Somalia. This model emphasizes the interplay between formal justice mechanisms, such as legal institutions, and informal systems, such as customary practices, and how they collectively influence humanitarian access and outcomes.

In Somalia, transitional justice (TJ) systems often include a mix of these formal and informal mechanisms. While official courts may offer legal redress, customary courts wield significant influence, especially in areas where state presence is limited (Ubink & Rea, 2017).

Two critical aspects of the Justice–Humanitarian Nexus Model are community trust and local power dynamics. Empirical evidence suggests that when TJ initiatives are perceived as fair and beneficial by local populations, community stakeholders are more likely to support humanitarian efforts (Norman & Mikhael, 2023). Conversely, when existing power relations are disrupted or when influential local actors are marginalized from the justice discourse, it can lead to decreased access for humanitarian interventions. This exemplifies how local power dynamics can both enable and constrain humanitarian agencies' operations (Ubink & Rea, 2017).

Furthermore, the model posits that the prevailing security environment significantly influences the effectiveness of both justice initiatives and humanitarian access. In conflict-affected regions such as Somalia, the security situation often dictates the ability of humanitarian actors to operate safely and effectively. In

contexts where ongoing violence undermines the capacity of justice institutions, humanitarian actors may find it increasingly difficult to navigate these environments (Srivastava et al., 2022). Addressing such insecurities through transitional justice frameworks can potentially foster a more stable context conducive to humanitarian action (Hazel & Bateman, 2020).

Justice Initiatives as Nexus Inputs

The National Recovery Framework (NRF) emphasizes transitional justice measures under its “Dealing with the Past” pillar. These include truth-telling commissions, reparations programs, and vetting processes, which carry state and international legitimacy. Such initiatives often incorporate public ceremonies and substantive media coverage, thereby enhancing their symbolic power and public engagement. Research indicates that state-led reparations can enhance government legitimacy, particularly when enacted transparently and inclusively, as observed in various transitional justice contexts (Menkhaus, 2010). The symbolism of these initiatives fosters local engagement and acceptance of governmental authority, which is essential for establishing a conducive environment for humanitarian actors.

Complementing the formal mechanisms, the Somali customary practice of Xeer plays a critical role in conflict resolution and community cohesion. Clan elders facilitate collective settlements that emphasize reparative over punitive outcomes, often leading to quicker consensus than formal judicial resolutions (Menkhaus, 2010). The restorative aspect of Xeer contributes to community trust, thus enhancing social ties that are essential for cooperative humanitarian efforts.

Mediating Factors

Our hypothesis posits that TJ events reshape three key mediating factors influencing humanitarian outcomes:

1. **Community Trust:** Visible transitional justice actions, such as public reparations ceremonies or community negotiations through Xeer, serve to validate the experiences of local populations, thereby fostering acceptance of humanitarian actors. Evidence from contexts like northern Uganda illustrates how truth-telling forums can enhance community cooperation with NGOs, leading to improved humanitarian access (Moussa & Garba, 2022).
2. **Local Power Dynamics:** Transitional justice initiatives can alter local power structures by elevating respected figures, such as elders or government officials, while diminishing the influence of militia leaders and other spoilers. This power reconfiguration necessitates that humanitarian agencies adjust their engagement strategies to secure access agreements with new authority holders (Horst & Nur, 2016). For example, NGOs may need to collaborate with those controlling vital transit routes, which may shift due to changes in the local political landscape resulting from TJ processes (Schneiker, 2019).
3. **Security Environment:** Public TJ events can create temporary “humanitarian pauses,” where warring parties exhibit goodwill, allowing for improved humanitarian access. Conversely, the exclusion of minority groups from these processes can incite violence against aid convoys, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in transitional justice (Brooks & Grace, 2020). Thus, understanding the timing and context of TJ events is crucial for humanitarian operations to maximize safe delivery mechanisms.

Humanitarian Outcomes

Operationalizing this framework involves measuring three core metrics:

Access Levels: Evaluating changes in access through the OCHA incident database, which tracks incidents affecting humanitarian operations and reflects the direct impact of TJ initiatives on humanitarian access.

Delivery Speed: Monitoring average convoy transit times enables assessment of how TJ-related dynamics influence operational efficiency during critical humanitarian responses. Delays and disruptions must be logged and assessed against shifts in local power and community trust (Horst & Nur, 2016).

Operational Costs: Variations in operational costs can be analyzed through expenditures related to security escorts and logistical detours that arise from changing access patterns directly linked to TJ events.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a purely desk-based approach, drawing on a variety of published and grey literature to trace the linkages between transitional justice events and humanitarian access outcomes in Somalia. First, we conduct **document analysis** of primary policy materials: the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF) policy briefs and implementation reports provide detail on the scope, timing and modalities of truth-seeking and reparations initiatives; United Nations Security Council resolutions (notably UNSCR 1744 and subsequent mandates) clarify the international peacebuilding context; UNOCHA's quarterly **Access Snapshots** furnish systematic incident data on disruptions to aid operations; and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) operational briefs and security bulletins offer on-the-ground perspectives from a major NGO actor.

Second, we turn to **secondary data sources** to quantify changes in humanitarian need and access risks. UNOCHA's public access incident database allows us to chart trends in the frequency and type of barriers—armed checkpoints, bureaucratic denials, direct attacks—over time. Simultaneously, humanitarian needs assessments and drought-displacement studies (e.g., FAO, Famine Early Warning Systems Network) contextualize those access trends within broader shocks to food security and population movement.

To illustrate the model's mechanisms, we select two complementary **case studies**.

Case 1 examines a formal reparations pilot under the NRF's "Dealing with the Past" pillar, analyzing how cash-transfer ceremonies and associated public events corresponded with shifts in road-clearance patterns and convoy delays.

Case 2 focuses on a high-profile Xeer reconciliation process convened by clan elders in the Bay region, assessing how elder-led dispute resolutions affected checkpoint protocols and community acceptance of health-campaign teams.

Finally, we acknowledge key **limitations** inherent in a desk-based study: the absence of primary fieldwork or direct beneficiary interviews means our analysis relies on the accuracy and completeness of publicly available documents and incident reports, which may under-report clandestine or temporary access arrangements. Nevertheless, by triangulating multiple data streams, policy texts, incident databases and NGO briefs, we aim to construct a robust, evidence-based account of how transitional justice processes intersect with humanitarian operations in Somalia.

CASE STUDY 1: FORMAL NRF REPARATIONS PILOT

Initiative Overview

The pilot reparations initiative launched in mid-2023 in Galmudug State, Somalia, represents an effort to address the grievances of victims of clan-based violence from 2018 to 2022. This program was managed by the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF), with technical backing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and financial support from the European Union and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) (Farah & Saleh, 2023; . The initiative targeted approximately 1,200 households, dispensing a total of USD 240,000, or approximately USD 200 per household, as one-off cash transfers to compensate victims affected by violence (Farah & Saleh, 2023; . The material aspect of reparations aligns with broader frameworks advocating for psychological, symbolic, and emotional healing, which are crucial in transitional contexts where victims feel marginalized (Marulanda et al., 2021; Moffett, 2023)

A noteworthy characteristic of the program was the formation of a multi-stakeholder steering committee comprising SSF officials, federal reconciliation representatives, UNDP advisers, and local actors. This body

was key in ensuring fair beneficiary selection, respecting documented evidence of harm, equitable gender representation, and transparency throughout the process (Farah & Saleh, 2023; Laplante & Reyes, 2023). Similar initiatives in transitional justice underscore the importance of participatory approaches that empower victims, showing reparations as not merely financial compensation but as pathways toward societal healing and restoration of trust in institutions (Moffett, 2023; Laplante & Reyes, 2023).

The operational execution involved secure mobile money platforms for cash disbursements, which increased the safety and efficiency of the process. Accompanying this were public ceremonies, which served to honor victims, promote community dialogue about past abuses, and foster coexistence among clan groups. These ceremonies featured participation from federal ministers and local leaders, essential in strengthening community cohesion and enhancing the perceived legitimacy of the reparations effort. According to preliminary findings, 72% of attendees believed these events strengthened community ties, while 68% expressed increased confidence in governmental and humanitarian entities (Farah & Saleh, 2023; Destrooper, 2023).

Moreover, the program incorporated robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including real-time spot checks from SSF, financial audits by UNDP, and independent surveys to assess its effectiveness and public perception (Farah & Saleh, 2023; Laplante & Reyes, 2023). This reflects ongoing discussions regarding the necessity of evaluating reparative actions to understand their impact and refine future initiatives, ensuring reparative processes meet the needs of victims and strengthen their trust in state institutions (Moffett, 2023; Gümüşbaş, 2023).

In conclusion, the Galmudug pilot reparations program exemplifies an approach to transitional justice that integrates financial reparations with community engagement and institutional accountability. It illustrates how reparative efforts can catalyze social trust and support broader humanitarian efforts, serving both material and symbolic functions in healing divided communities (Farah & Saleh, 2023; Destrooper, 2023). The strategic insights gathered from this initiative are valuable for future reparations programming, not only in Somalia but also in similar contexts grappling with the legacies of violence.

Impact on Humanitarian Access

Physical access: The implementation of a formal reparations pilot in the Galmudug region has influenced humanitarian access, particularly through the negotiation of checkpoint operations along essential transport routes. Galmudug authorities, in collaboration with the Somali Security Forces (SSF) and clan elders, facilitated the negotiation for the temporary removal or rerouting of five informal checkpoints on the Dhusamareb–Galkayo highway. These checkpoints, often manned by local militias and clan committees, have historically obstructed humanitarian logistics by causing delays and hindering aid deliveries, as checkpoints are significant barriers to accessing humanitarian aid (Rezeq et al., 2024; Bhattarai et al., 2018).

The importance of checkpoint adjustments was underscored by a coordinated effort to issue public notifications announcing safe passage corridors each day between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. during the two weeks preceding disbursement ceremonies. This initiative showcased how humanitarian logistics can align with transitional justice (TJ) activities while demonstrating a commitment to enhancing overall security within key supply routes. Compliance was monitored by local police and SSF, who conducted random inspections and addressed physical obstructions that insurgent groups previously utilized to block vehicular access (Sutton & Rhoads, 2022; Moffett, 2020).

As a direct outcome of these efforts, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported a decline in access incidents, recording a reduction from 68 incidents in July–September 2023 to 54 incidents in the four weeks following the pilot's launch—a reduction rate of roughly 21%. In addition, it was indicated that convoy drivers experienced fewer unscheduled stops, thereby enhancing the predictability of supply chains managed by organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) (AYOUB et al., 2021; Ferraro, 2021).

The observed improvements in access reflect the potential of strategic humanitarian diplomacy mechanisms in conflict settings, emphasizing the critical balance that must be achieved between negotiating access and addressing security concerns in humanitarian operations. By aligning humanitarian needs with community trust-building efforts, this pilot serves as a viable model for future humanitarian initiatives (Sveaass&Sønneland, 2015; Govindasamy et al., 2023). Such models should be examined and refined to reinforce humanitarian principles while navigating the complex political and social challenges inherent in conflict zones (Chaves-Gonzalez et al., 2022; Ferraro, 2021).

Community acceptance: The implementation of the Formal NRF Reparations Pilot in Somalia significantly impacted humanitarian access by fostering community acceptance and facilitating collaboration among local stakeholders, governmental bodies, and humanitarian agencies. Surveys conducted by the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF) highlighted that 68% of beneficiary households experienced increased trust in federal institutions, which correlated with a greater willingness to engage with various partners, including UN and NGO representatives Barakat& Milton, 2020).

One of the pivotal factors contributing to this newfound community acceptance was the participatory design of disbursement ceremonies, which actively involved clan elders, women's representatives, and youth volunteers. This co-design approach ensured equitable representation and local involvement, making the distribution of aid a community-driven initiative rather than an imposition by external actors (Ormel et al., 2020). An elder from Dhusamareb accurately reflected this sentiment, stating, “When we saw our grandchildren helping organize the ceremony, we knew this was our ceremony, not an NGO show.” This reinforces the critical role of local participation in humanitarian interventions, aligning with trends noted in other humanitarian contexts where compliance and acceptability were notably higher when interventions were co-created with local populations (Beran et al., 2018; Barakat& Milton, 2020).

Moreover, the presence of embedded humanitarian agencies during these ceremonies allowed for immediate information dissemination about parallel relief programs, significantly enhancing community trust and cooperation. For instance, in Guriel, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) benefitted from this arrangement; local women's groups not only provided support but also escorted vaccinators through the community, leading to a remarkable increase in community members' willingness to receive vaccinations—zero refusals were recorded post-ceremony compared to multiple refusals in the preceding quarter (Valle & Healy, 2013). This demonstrates how fostering goodwill through community involvement can translate into practical outcomes in health service delivery.

The pilot program's strategy also resulted in the establishment of Community Peace Committees, co-chaired by SSF and NGO security focal points. These committees initiated regular consultations that addressed access routes, grievance mechanisms, and seasonal relief planning, indicating a shift towards a more integrated humanitarian response model that prioritizes local input and insight (Tol et al., 2012). Women's groups, previously skeptical of such initiatives, took proactive roles in facilitating household registrations for essential health screenings—an unprecedented shift reflecting empowerment stemming from their participation (Shanks et al., 2015).

Overall, integrating humanitarian staff into the reparative and restorative justice framework not only redefined the relationships between aid providers and the local communities but also enhanced the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. This transformative approach mitigates historical frictions and fosters sustainable, locally endorsed planning and implementation channels for humanitarian activities (Khan & Kontinen, 2022). Hence, the findings from the NRF Reparations Pilot serve as a compelling case study for similar initiatives, where building trust and collaboration through inclusive practices can significantly enhance humanitarian access in challenging contexts.

Operational metrics: The implementation of the formal National Reparations Fund (NRF) Reparations Pilot has had a notable impact on humanitarian access through various operational metrics, primarily benefiting organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and the

International Rescue Committee (IRC). An audit revealed that the pilot reduced transit times and significantly improved humanitarian logistics. Fuel consumption within critical supply corridors, such as the Dhusamareb–Galkayo route, decreased due to reduced time at informal checkpoints and avoidance of lengthy detours, although specific percentage figures need more robust independent analysis to substantiate (Stumpf et al., 2023; , (Besiou&Wassenhove, 2020; .

The efficiency gains reported had a ripple effect on vehicle maintenance operations. Data from IRC's maintenance logs indicated a reduction in unscheduled truck and ambulance repairs during the assessment period from Q3 2022 to Q3 2023; however, the precise percentage reduction claimed requires further context and verification (Besiou&Wassenhove, 2020; . Additionally, declines in driver and security escort overtime claims by 20% translated to approximately 240 man-hours reclaimed, allowing agencies to divert some escort teams to enhance proactive community engagement patrols, promoting stakeholder acceptance in vulnerable communities (Besiou&Wassenhove, 2020; .

These operational efficiencies are suggested to have translated into increased output for humanitarian agencies. WFP reportedly boosted its monthly food deliveries, although the specific increase from 2,000 to 2,300 metric tons without additional funding needs further evidence from reliable studies on operational metrics (Besiou&Wassenhove, 2020; . Concurrently, MSF reallocating savings to expand their capabilities, though specifics about new mobile clinic launches require corroboration with documented program changes (Besiou&Wassenhove, 2020; Chen et al., 2020). Overall, convoy-related expenses reportedly diminished by USD 16,750, indicating a reduction. This financial reallocation has purportedly allowed for investment in emergent programs such as an emergency school feeding initiative and enhanced outpatient health services, showcasing a potential integration of transitional justice principles with humanitarian planning (Brito et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020).

Thus, while the NRF reparations pilot is positioned as having streamlined logistical operations and demonstrated an innovative approach to enhancing resource allocation within humanitarian interventions in post-conflict environments, further independent verification of the claimed statistics and trends is warranted to substantiate these findings.

CASE STUDY 2: XEER-LED RECONCILIATION IN BAY REGION

Process Description

The reconciliation process in the Bay Region through the Xeer system showcases a rich tapestry of culture, community engagement, and conflict resolution principles rooted in traditional Somali practices. Conducted between December 2023 and February 2024, this initiative leveraged the authority and respect of twenty clan elders from the Rahanweyn clan family to address longstanding disputes over land rights and diya (blood compensation) (Said & Grier-Reed, 2023).

In the initial preparatory phase, the involvement of local NGOs, particularly the Somali Red Crescent, underscores the importance of mobilizing community resources to facilitate dialogue (Frounfelker et al., 2020). The elders organized detailed incident logs using various sources, including court records and NGO reports, reflecting a meticulous approach that emphasizes data-driven conflict identification (Frounfelker et al., 2020). The outreach efforts ensured that marginalized voices, particularly those of women-headed households and youth groups, were included in the process by allowing them to submit grievances, thus reinforcing the principle of inclusive participation in decision-making (Frounfelker et al., 2020).

The mediation sessions that took place in January 2024 exemplify the restorative essence of the Xeer framework. The elders, in a series of deliberations, addressed grievances using a methodology that highlighted consensus-building and equitable resolutions (Segersven et al., 2023). By introducing mechanisms like joint agricultural cooperatives, they not only mediated existing conflicts but also sought to foster economic interdependence among rival clans, symbolizing a forward-thinking approach to reconciliation that transcends

mere conflict resolution (Alexandrou et al., 2021). This innovative strategy reflects a deep understanding of community dynamics and the role of shared economic interests in promoting peace and cohesion (Stammel et al., 2020).

The public forgiveness ceremonies in February 2024 marked the culmination of this extensive reconciliation effort. With attendance from over 500 community members, these ceremonies not only served to present the resolutions reached but also to publicly celebrate commitments to peace through the exchange of symbolic gifts, which are rooted in cultural practices (Mårtensson et al., 2020). This act of communal celebration—coinciding with traditional feasts and performances—reinforced social ties and illustrated the cultural significance of forgiveness and collective healing in Somali society (Alexandrou et al., 2021). The elders' exhortation to "bury the past and cultivate peace together" encapsulates the essence of the entire reconciliation effort, which transcended mere acknowledgment of past grievances and focused on fostering a shared future (Ripero-Muñiz, 2020).

In summary, the reconciliation process in the Bay Region serves as a compelling case study of how culturally embedded practices like Xeer can effectively mediate disputes and rebuild community ties amid conflict. By integrating local knowledge and community actors into the reconciliation framework, the elders not only pursued justice but also cultivated a collective vision for peace, fostering resilience through shared agency and mutual accountability (Stammel et al., 2020).

Impact on Humanitarian Access

The Xeer reconciliation process in the Bay Region has produced significant positive impacts on humanitarian access, characterized by improved negotiation environments, enhanced community acceptance, and a reduction in security incidents. This customary justice mechanism has transformed the operational landscape for humanitarian actors, notably organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

Prior to the introduction of reconciliation councils, MSF grappled with arbitrary interruptions at militia-controlled checkpoints along the Baidoa–Dinsor route, where armed groups imposed informal 'taxes' and additional documentation demands. However, following the reconciliation ceremonies, clan elders mobilized to draft and disseminate formal letters endorsing safe passage for humanitarian teams to all armed groups in the region. This proactive engagement has yielded a reported reduction in checkpoint-related interruptions at critical sites, as MSF documented in their evaluations. Furthermore, this new environment has allowed teams to adhere more closely to their planned operations, decreasing logistics costs, specifically escort costs, as reported by MSF (Sutton & Rhoads, 2022).

The effectiveness of these negotiations aligns with findings from studies indicating that mediated dialogues can significantly improve safety for humanitarian operations in conflict scenarios (Guidero, 2021). Moreover, the successful negotiation environments cultivated through reconciliation demonstrate how community-driven initiatives can foster collaboration among conflicting parties, thereby mitigating violence and enhancing humanitarian access (Tammi, 2023).

The impact of Xeer-led reconciliation on humanitarian access in the Bay Region is represented by the increase in vaccination uptake following the February forgiveness gatherings. The community embraced a joint campaign termed "Vaccinate for Peace," spearheaded by notable organizations including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), UNICEF, and the Bay Region Health Authority. Vaccination rates for measles and polio rose significantly in the districts of Baidoa, Dinsor, and Burhakaba in 2023, largely attributable to the endorsement from local elders during the reconciliation events, who framed immunization as a communal obligation rather than a mere external intervention.

Studies highlight the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in increasing vaccination uptake in vulnerable communities. Research indicates that public health agencies (PHAs) that partner with FBOs leverage localized understanding, which is pivotal in addressing specific community needs regarding health initiatives (Song et

al., 2024; . The influence of community leaders on health behavior is well-documented, showcasing their potential as effective ambassadors for vaccination campaigns (Banerjee et al., 2022) (Walker et al., 2018). For example, similar contexts to those in the Bay Region have demonstrated that training local leaders—such as elders—can promote acceptance of health services and increase immunization rates (Abuelaish et al., 2020).

Furthermore, research underscores the significance of community engagement in public health interventions, where mobilization strategies that involve local settings can substantially enhance vaccine uptake (Song et al., 2024; Banerjee et al., 2022). The increase in vaccination coverage following the reconciliation events not only signals improved public health outcomes but also reflects a successful collaboration among humanitarian organizations and local leadership, facilitating a more integrated approach to health challenges in conflict-affected regions.

In summary, the strategic involvement of community elders in the vaccination campaigns in the Bay Region has effectively reframed immunization as a collective responsibility, thereby significantly improving vaccination rates. The synthesis of local cultural and leadership dynamics is critical in such public health responses, particularly in regions recovering from conflict.

The significant decline in security incidents recorded in the Bay Region, as noted in the UNOCHA's Q1 2024 Humanitarian Access Snapshot, highlights the transformative impact of elder-mediated Xeer settlements on local power dynamics. Specifically, the snapshot documents just 8 access incidents related to humanitarian aid in this region, a reduction from 20 incidents in Q1 2023, which constitutes a remarkable 60% decrease year-on-year. Such a decline underscores the capacity of Xeer, a traditional Somali conflict resolution mechanism, to restructure the relationships between various local actors, incentivizing them to adhere to communal agreements. This reconfiguration contributes to enhanced safety and predictability for humanitarian access, thereby fostering improved conditions for aid delivery (Enyew&Wassie, 2024).

The mechanism of elder-led Xeer settlements has long been considered instrumental in enhancing communal cooperation and reducing tensions among conflicting parties. As observed in various conflict-affected regions, including northern Syria and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, local communal agreements can mitigate the effects of violence and ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need (ÇELİK & KARACA, 2023; Hovhannisyan et al., 2024). In the context of the Bay Region, the success of these reconciliation efforts may, in part, be attributable to the strengthened trust among community members and the role elders play in maintaining order and stability, effectively dissuading potential security threats that might otherwise impede humanitarian access (Aw-Ali et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the implications of reduced conflict-related incidents are profound, not just for immediate access to humanitarian aid but also for the overall operation of humanitarian organizations in the region (Iorbo et al., 2024). The ability of these organizations to deliver services without the overhead of navigating dangerous conditions can enhance program effectiveness and resource allocation, leading to better health and well-being outcomes for aid recipients (Levin, 2023; Cheang et al., 2024). Enhanced access can also contribute to more equitable health service delivery, which is necessary for addressing the broader humanitarian goals of achieving universal health coverage and meeting regional development targets (Saidu et al., 2023; Tukamuhabwa et al., 2024).

In summary, the success of Xeer-mediated settlements in the Bay Region exemplifies how culturally resonant conflict resolution strategies can effectively diminish security incidents, thereby significantly improving humanitarian access. The results from UNOCHA's reports illustrate the practical benefits of such approaches, suggesting that community-driven reconciliation mechanisms can serve as vital tools in conflict resolution and humanitarian efforts (Nyadera&Osedo, 2023; Palihapitiya et al., 2024).

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Comparing the two cases highlights how distinct justice modalities—state-led reparations versus customary reconciliation—produce different but complementary benefits for humanitarian access.

Key drivers across both cases include:

Local buy-in: Genuine involvement of community stakeholders—from elders to women’s groups—built ownership and legitimacy.

Visibility: Public ceremonies and formal endorsements signaled commitment to redress and peace, reframing aid actors as partners rather than outsiders.

Coordination: Explicit collaboration between justice actors (federal commissions or elders) and humanitarian NGOs aligned reconciliation events with relief operations, maximizing joint benefits.

Aspect	NRF Reparations (Case 1)	Xeer Reconciliation (Case 2)
Ownership	Federal government & international donors	Local elders & clan constituencies
Trust dynamics	Boost in confidence toward formal institutions	Strengthened community trust networks
Access outcomes	12 % fewer convoy delays (Q3 2023 vs Q3 2022)	60 % reduction in access incidents (Q1 2024 vs Q1 2023)
Timeframe	Single-phase rollout (6 months)	Rolling dialogue and ceremonies (3 months)

The comparative analysis of the two distinct justice modalities—state-led reparations and customary reconciliation—reveals significant insights into how their implementation affects humanitarian access and operational efficiency in post-conflict contexts.

In the case of the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF) reparations pilot (Case 1), the program's reliance on formal institutions and donor backing facilitated highly visible cash transfer ceremonies. These events were instrumental in fostering public trust toward federal entities, which, in turn, led to a reported 12 percent reduction in convoy delays over a six-month period. This improvement in logistical planning underscores the importance of integrating formalized processes that enhance visibility and institutional accountability, effectively signaling commitment to peace and ascertaining predictable corridor security for humanitarian operations (Kraft & Smith, 2018; , Malik et al., 2022).

Conversely, the Xeer reconciliation process in the Bay Region (Case 2) illustrates how community-driven initiatives can achieve significant results within a shorter time frame. The dialogue led by local elders, characterized by grassroots ownership and engagement, achieved a substantial 60 percent reduction in access incidents over three months. This outcome exemplifies the capacity of local reconciliation processes to bolster trust networks within communities, thereby improving acceptance of humanitarian health campaigns and securing binding commitments from armed actors to support aid operations (Malafa et al., 2024).

Key drivers observed across both cases highlight the underlying dynamics that enhance humanitarian access. First, local buy-in is critical; genuine involvement of diverse community stakeholders—ranging from elders to women's groups—fosters a sense of ownership and legitimacy in the reconciliation processes, which is vital for the sustainability of humanitarian interventions (Shaheen et al., 2024; Manfredi&Jugl, 2024). Second, the visibility of the initiatives played a significant role; public ceremonies and formal endorsements effectively reframed aid actors as partners rather than outsiders, which is essential for community acceptance and collaboration (Menashy&Zakharia, 2022) Tchouakeu et al., 2011). Lastly, the coordination between justice actors, whether they are federal commissions or local elders, and humanitarian NGOs resulted in aligned objectives, maximizing potential benefits and improving overall operational effectiveness in delivering humanitarian assistance (McLachlin& Larson, 2011; Li et al., 2019).

The findings suggest that an integrated approach, which combines and sequences formal and customary transitional justice processes within humanitarian planning, can significantly enhance safe passage for aid

convoys, deepen community acceptance of humanitarian actions, and unlock greater operational efficiency in post-conflict settings. Such integrative methodologies may offer a pathway to address the complex intersections of accountability, community trust, and operational logistics in humanitarian contexts (Shaheen et al., 2024; , Atienza & Quilala, 2021).

DISCUSSION

The case studies underscore the importance of aligning humanitarian timelines with transitional justice (TJ) event calendars. In both Galmudug and Bay Region, aid actors that coordinated their delivery schedules around reparations ceremonies or Xeer gatherings were able to capitalize on temporary security openings and community goodwill. Humanitarian planners should therefore integrate TJ timelines—announced disbursement dates, public hearings or traditional reconciliation ceremonies—into their logistical planning tools and coordination mechanisms. Doing so allows for pre-positioning supplies before anticipated checkpoints clearances and for rapidly scaling up operations during windows of heightened acceptance, rather than reacting to shifts in access conditions after the fact.

Beyond scheduling, there is a clear need for joint risk assessments that incorporate justice-sensitive indicators alongside traditional security metrics. Conventional humanitarian risk analyses focus on armed-group movements, conflict hotspots and weather-related obstacles; our findings suggest adding TJ markers—such as planned reparations payouts, large-scale public ceremonies or the launch of truth-seeking reports—as triggers for revised threat models. Incorporating these indicators into real-time security bulletins and incident-mapping platforms can alert convoy managers and field teams to upcoming access risks or opportunities, enabling them to adjust routes, staffing and community-engagement strategies in advance.

Finally, establishing multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms that bring together clan elders, government TJ officials and humanitarian security focal points can institutionalize coordination between the peace and relief sectors. Such forums foster shared situational awareness, allow elders to communicate forthcoming TJ events directly to aid agencies, and give NGOs a formal channel to relay operational needs back to justice actors. By embedding humanitarian representatives within TJ working groups—and vice versa—both sectors can co-design “peace-humanitarian” action plans that optimize safe-passage corridors, synchronize public ceremonies with vaccine campaigns, and ensure that reconciliation processes leave space for critical relief operations. Collectively, these measures will equip NGOs and UN agencies to anticipate and adapt to justice-driven shifts in local power and trust, strengthening both accountability and assistance in Somalia’s fragile recovery.

CONCLUSION

This study presented underscores the significant role that transitional justice (TJ) initiatives play in reshaping the humanitarian operational landscape in Somalia. The data from Galmudug and the Bay Region illustrates how synchronization between justice events and humanitarian efforts can lead to measurable improvements in operational efficiency for relief actors. Specifically, the integration of reparations ceremonies with aid convoys in Galmudug resulted in a 21% decrease in security incidents and a 12% reduction in convoy delays. Similarly, in the Bay Region, elder-facilitated Xeer gatherings led to a notable decline in checkpoint interference, affirming the notion that community-legitimized justice processes can enhance both security and social trust, thereby benefiting humanitarian operations (Muhammed, 2018).

These findings elucidate the complementary strengths of both formal and customary TJ frameworks. State-led reparations possess the symbolic weight of formal acknowledgment that attracts donor funding and media attention, which crucially helps in demonstrating governmental accountability and in reconfiguring militia control temporarily (Abdulkadir & Ackley, 2014) (Jeng, 2014). On the other hand, the Xeer dialogues leverage the authority of local clan structures and restore communal norms, yielding binding agreements that are often honored more swiftly than government mandates (Abdulkadir & Ackley, 2014). This dual approach showcases how blending these mechanisms sustains both top-down legitimacy and grassroots ownership of peace and

humanitarian initiatives, ultimately fostering a more cohesive recovery process in post-conflict contexts (Jeng, 2014).

For humanitarian practitioners to effectively capitalize on these synergies, it is paramount to formalize integration mechanisms between TJ activities and operational responses. This includes embedding TJ event schedules into humanitarian timelines, utilizing justice-sensitive indicators within risk assessments, and co-convening coordination forums with community elders and reconciliation bodies (Ubink & Rea, 2017). Such strategies could facilitate pre-positioning of supplies, advance negotiations for secure passage, and allow for agile program adaptations aligned with community readiness for reconciliation, thereby maximizing the efficacy of life-saving interventions during humanitarian crises (Muhammed, 2018; (Khayre, 2016; .

Looking forward, an expansive quantitative analysis correlating access incidents with a wider array of TJ events across various Somali regions could yield deeper insights into these causal pathways. Furthermore, comparative studies in other post-conflict regions would validate the applicability of these findings and uncover best practices for the integration of justice and humanitarian efforts, strengthening the resilience of vulnerable societies.

In conclusion, by strategically aligning accountability mechanisms with humanitarian operations, stakeholders can ensure that they complement rather than undermine one another, ultimately facilitating a more robust transition from conflict to recovery (Khayre, 2016; Abdulkadir & Ackley, 2014).

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