



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT



Breaking The Chains:

Tackling irregular migration and human trafficking through good governance, political participation and, Youth Peace and Security Inclusiveness in Garowe, Puntland - Somalia

Report By:

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Introduction

Irregular migration and human trafficking have become critical challenges in Somalia, particularly affecting young people and women. Thousands of Somali youth embark on dangerous migration routes in search of better opportunities, often falling victim to exploitation, abuse, and trafficking networks. At the same time, limited participation of young women in governance, leadership, and political decision-making has weakened the capacity of institutions to respond effectively to these challenges.

Women's voices are crucial in shaping policies on security, economic empowerment, and social protection - yet their representation remains low across national and local governance structures. This forum sought to explore how enhancing young women's inclusion in leadership and governance can serve as a sustainable solution to addressing irregular migration and human trafficking by promoting social justice, equitable opportunity, and accountable governance.

The purpose of the forum was to create a national dialogue platform that connects the issues of **irregular migration, human trafficking, and women's leadership**, fostering solutions that empower young women to drive change in governance, policymaking, and community action in Somalia.

Background

Agents of Peace [AoP] is a youth dynamic, youth-led organization working at the forefront of peacebuilding and social transformation in Somalia and Kenya. Born out of the belief that young people are not just beneficiaries of peace but powerful agents of it, our mission is to empower youth to lead their communities towards stability, justice, and sustainable development.

In regions long affected by conflict, AoP's focus is on equipping youth with the tools and platforms they need to create change. Through leadership training, civic education, and community engagement, we strengthen the role of youth in good governance and conflict resolution.

One of AoP's most urgent priorities is addressing the growing crisis of irregular migration and human trafficking threats that endanger the lives and futures of thousands of young Somalis. In response, AoP launched the forum "**Breaking The Chains: Tackling Irregular Migration And Human Trafficking Through Good Governance, Political Participation And Youth Inclusiveness In Somalia.**"

This groundbreaking initiative brings together young leaders, policymakers, activists, and media professionals to explore the root causes driving youth to take dangerous migration routes, such as lack of opportunities, insecurity, and exclusion from political and economic life. Through open dialogue and strategic advocacy, we work to identify safe, more empowering alternatives for Somali youth.

AoP also advocates for greater youth representation in political processes, transparency in governance, and access to livelihoods and education. Our mentorship programs, media partnerships, and community-based

forums aim to inspire a generation of resilient, informed, and courageous youth who say no to exploitation and yes to peace.

Agents Of Peace

Agents of Peace [AoP] was established as an organization in response to the growth of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorist acts against innocent lives in Kenya. AoP's core mandate is on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism [P/CVE] and Radicalization within the community, and to promote peaceful coexistence among our society regardless of Religious, ethnic, and tribal backgrounds. To deliver on its cultural identity [vision and mission], AoP organizes and convenes various activities and programs centered on empowering key social actors on the prevention of P/CVE, enhancing prospects for peace and security.

Its core activities include street campaigns addressing and raising awareness on violent extremism and terrorism, peace walks against terrorist attacks, peace summits with religious leaders to address radicalization and the true position of faith and how it shapes narratives around extremism, and university programs on preventing/countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism. As AoP, the organization strives to eradicate the myths, negative perceptions, and assumptions within Kenyan Communities on religious, ethnic, and tribal grounds, which leads to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered.

Vision Statement

To promote peaceful coexistence among societies regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, or color

Mission Statement

To provide a platform of peace in which people's differences and misunderstandings can be dealt with non-violently through dialogue and discussions.

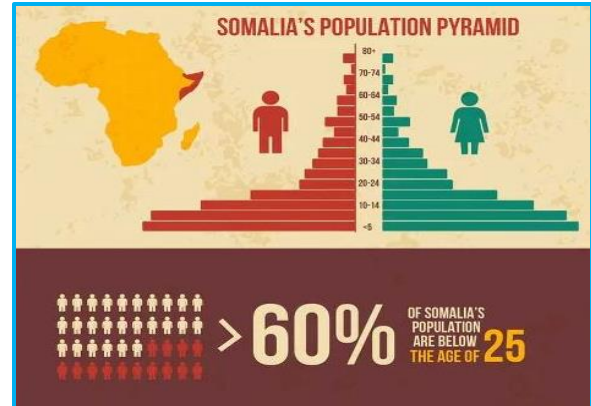
Why Our Work Matters

Somalia has one of the youngest populations in the world but systemic barriers continue to hold back youth potential. Exclusion from education, decision-making, and employment has made young people vulnerable to violence, radicalization, and exploitative migration networks.

At agents of peace, we believe the future belongs to those who build it. That's why we're committed to making space for youth especially young women to lead, influence policy, and defend their rights. By listening to their voices, investing in their growth, and standing beside them, we are breaking cycles of vulnerability and opening pathways to dignity, safety, and leadership.



147 stranded somali migrants assisted to return home from Libya-IOM



World Bank Group

Key Discussion Themes / Sessions

Session Title	Focus Area
Session 1: <i>Understanding the Link Between Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking in Somalia</i>	Exploring patterns, push factors, and impacts on youth and women.
Session 2: <i>The Role of Governance in Protecting Human Rights and Preventing Trafficking</i>	Accountability, legislation, and institutional frameworks.
Session 3: <i>Breaking Gender Barriers: Women's Inclusion in Political Leadership</i>	Strategies to enhance women's voice in policymaking and governance.
Session 4: <i>Empowering Young Women as Change Agents</i>	Leadership training, mentorship, and community mobilization approaches.
Session 5: <i>Partnerships for Prevention: Civil Society, Government, and International Cooperation</i>	Strengthening coordination and joint responses.
Session 6: <i>Voices of Survivors and Returnees</i>	Personal testimonies and community reintegration experiences.

Breaking the chains: youth agency amidst conflict, irregular migration and human trafficking in Puntland

Puntland, a semi-autonomous region in northeastern Somalia, remains at the frontline of both opportunity and crisis, while its youth represent a vital demographic dividend with the potential to build peace and drive development; they are also disproportionately affected by insecurity, unemployment, and exclusion -factors that fuel dangerous cycles of irregular migration and human trafficking.

Against the backdrop of Puntland's ongoing military campaign against the international terror group IS - a resilient extremist group entrenched in the region's Bari, the need to empower youth has never been more urgent. Despite facing a growing insurgency that has doubled in strength due to foreign recruitment and transnational movement, Puntland continues to receive limited support from the federal government, relying instead on local resilience and international partners. Amid this security vacuum, young people are often caught in the middle -targeted by recruitment networks, traffickers, or compelled to migrate under life-threatening conditions. These pressures underscore the importance of addressing the root causes of migration and trafficking through a youth-centered, peacebuilding lens.

In response, AoP hosted a **high-level public engagement forum** under the theme; “**Breaking the chains; tackling irregular migration and human trafficking through good governance, political participation, and youth peace and security inclusiveness in Somalia.**”

Unlike tokenistic youth forums, this gathering focused on real agency- moving youth from symbolic participants to active drivers of policy, peace, and protection. The form served as a platform to elevate youth voices, foster intergenerational collaboration, and build consensus on sustainable alternatives to migration empowerment, and stronger governance. Through inclusive panel discussions, expert insights, and media coverage, the event emphasized that young Somalis are not just victims of conflict and migration- they are change makers, innovators, and the key to long-term stability in Puntland and beyond.

By strengthening youth engagement in peace and security efforts and addressing systemic exclusions, agents of peace is helping build a future where young people choose hope over despair, dignity over exploitation, leadership over silence.

Forum Pictorials

