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Exploring Peace and Security Dynamics in the East Gojjam

Zone: Challenges and Opportunities for Community

Development

BY:

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Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFT	Developing Families Together
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

Abstract

The study explores peace and security trends in East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Regional State, on the backdrop of increased socio and political tensions in the region. Using a qualitative study design, the study explores the attitudes, experiences, and peace building activities among local communities after the armed conflict and political polarization. Data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with government officials, representatives of civil society organizations, religious leaders, elders, and youth.

The findings unveil a sharp fall in peace and security, bearing much fuel from political exclusion, ethnic federalism, marginalization of youth, and demilitarization of regional forces. People experienced widespread psychological and material suffering, epitomized by terror, forced displacement, livelihood loss, and social breakdown. Conventional indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution that were the hallmark of communal life hitherto have been eroded by politicization and distrust. And yet, concurrently, state responses were generally perceived as militarized and reactive, and civil society movements struggled to convincingly engage rural populations.

In spite of this adversity, the research reveals strong domestic desires for peace and processes of recovery and reconciliation at the local level. Solutions ranged from inclusive talk, reform of the constitution, job opportunities for youth, to hybrid justice mechanisms that combine customary and formal systems. The research has addressed few theories such as Conflict Theory, Structural Violence and Community-Based Peace building paradigms, emphasizes the imperative of an inclusive, grassroots approach to sustainable peace building in East Gojjam Zone of Amhara regional State.

The study concludes that enduring peace in East Gojjam Zone of Amhara regional state will not only require a cessation of violence but also re-established trust, justice and representative government. It offers recommendations to government, civil society, religious institutions and international organizations to support people-led peace processes attuned to the knowledge and resilience of the most impacted groups.

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Chapter One

1. Background

Conflict and political violence are recurring phenomena that have plagued many nations, particularly in the post-colonial era. These events often span across decades, creating cycles of instability that hinder social, economic, and political development. While conflict can stem from a variety of sources, it often involves complex interplays of power dynamics, historical grievances, and resource distribution, ultimately shaping the experiences of affected communities (Voorhoeve, 2007). Armed conflict is a major problem for growing nations. The central responsibilities of any government include ensuring peace, security, and freedoms for its citizens. These responsibilities form the foundation of human rights and democratic governance.

Conflict is a global issue, with Africa being particularly exposed to ethnic and other forms of conflict in terms of many causes, as seen in countries in Africa like Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia which have suffered severe consequences in the post-cold War era (Jalali & Lipset, 1992; Wolf, 2006; Hussein, 2003, as cited in IPSS & FES, 2012,). Communities in most African countries face emerging pressures to peace and security, requiring strategic partnerships that effectively address these challenges and barriers (Njambi, 2018).

The East Gojjam Zone, located in the Amhara Regional State, the Zone has rich cultural traditions, natural resources, human resources, and historical significance for the nation (Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism [MoCT], 2018). However, it is also a region experiencing with many complex challenges related to peace and security. These challenges are rooted in a direct and indirect complex relationship of socio-economic disparities, political tensions, and resource-based conflicts, which have occasionally intensified into localized instability (Institute for Peace and Security Studies [IPSS] & Friedrich-Ebert-Sifting [FES], 2012). The region's strategic importance as a hub for agriculture, trade, tourism and community interaction further underlines the need for a stable and secure environment (Central Statistical Agency [CSA], 2020).

Historically, East Gojjam has been recognized for its strong common bonds and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and techniques for the last decades. Elders and normal systems have played a very significant

role in mediating arguments and fostering harmony within communities and surrounds (Pankhurst, 2003; Assefa, 1996). These cultural strengths and modern issues such as rapid urbanization, population growth, unemployment, and shifts in social and political dynamics have strained the social fabric, exposing vulnerabilities in the peace and security setting (CSA, 2020).

Community perceptions of peace and security are critical in shaping the region's development pathway. Most of the time government policies and development programs goal to address these concerns, the voices and experiences of community followers often persist underexplored (IPSS & FES, 2012). Empathetic this perspective is very important for shaping inclusive and sustainable strategies that reflect the facts of those most precious. What Is More, through tasks like capacity-building programs, versatile closures and charges, and economic empowerment enterprises, local groups, NGOs, CBOs, and the government have been the charge of promoting peace and security department (Njambi, 2018; UNDP, 2021). Institutional gaps, a want of an ordinate model to effectively address the nation's nub causes, and a lack of resourcefulness from both national and international evolution partners are some of the pregnant obstacles these efforts encounter in the region, especially in the East Gojam Zone (World Bank, 2020).

This study aims to investigate the perspectives and experiences of communities in the East Gojjam Zone to pinpoint the difficulties they encounter and find viable avenues for the Zone's sustainable peace and development. Additionally, it aims to provide practical, shared compassion that can help local stakeholders, elders, lawmakers, cultural gatekeepers, community representatives, and civil society organizations, and support community-driven peace building efforts throughout the region.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Numerous researches on peace and security have been carried out for many years in Ethiopia and other countries, with an emphasis on its ramifications both domestically and internationally in Ethiopia. However, there is still a great deal to be done to address the unique opportunities and challenges associated with peace and security dynamics for Ethiopia citizens particularly East Gojjam Zone of Amhara Regional State. Useful methods for exhausting peace and security to encourage sustainable community growth in the region,

respectively, have received little attention, even though previous researches emphasize the region's challenges with ethnic conflicts, governance concerns, and resource allocation.

Ethnic diversity, internal conflicts and security issues, poverty, and crises like drought, flood, deprivation and food insecurity make the Horn of Africa one of the world's most unstable and disadvantaged regions. In addition, the region experiences high number of migration, internal displacement and high disease rates. Ethiopia has always been allied to poverty and violence against women and children due to its location in this unstable region, and it continues to face difficulties and complications to its stability and statehood.

Ethiopia was one of the influential countries in the Horn of Africa and played a significant role to continent for a long period. But since implementation ethnic federalism in 1991, which politicized ethnic identities and flashed interethnic conflict, the nation has suffered from instability. While ethnic federalism was intended to address historical problems, it has instead fuelled conflict over resources, identity, geographical limits as well as limited nationalism. These tensions continue to affect Ethiopia's political landscape, which has deteriorated since 2017 (Cheru, 2023).

Significant internal instability and external influences have worsened conflicts and rendered peace and security ineffective in certain parts of Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa. Ethiopia has faced internal and external challenges such as ethnic divisions, law nationality and the intricacies of its multi-religious and multi-ethnic culture. The absence of a democratic practice in the nation has increased tensions, weak conflict resolution practices and delayed efforts at peace building. In order to address the underlying causes of instability, the region should emphasize the necessity of inclusive peace building tactics, democratic reforms, and strong governance (Dengle, 2013).

In addition to that land scarcity, resource reduction and a high percentage of internally displaced people (IDPs) as a result of on-going conflicts are some of its major problems. The agriculture of commodities including maize, barley, and tiff is the foundation of the region's economy. Many communities' members in the region were destructively impacted by the region exciting food insecurity and other basic services in

2021, which was made inferior by the Tigray conflict, locust incursions, and increase (National Disaster Risk Management Commission, 2021).

The Benishangul-Gumuz Region to the southwest, the Oromia Region to the south, the Tigray Region to the north, the Afar Region to the east, and Sudan to the west are its neighbors of Amhara region. Despite recent improvements in health, agriculture and education facilities, the region still faces numerous issues, including high rates of female genital mutilation and child marriage, food shortages, and child malnutrition.

Despite significant research on peace and security at national and international levels, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the unique dynamics of peace and security in East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Regional State. Previous studies have focused broadly on national-level conflicts, often overlooking the local socio-economic, political, and ethnic tensions in the region. This gap in research has hindered effective intervention strategies that can address the region's specific challenges. For instance, while some studies touch on peacebuilding efforts, they often fail to consider the historical role of traditional conflict resolution methods or the impact of recent socio-political changes on community stability. This research aims to fill these gaps by identifying the specific challenges to peace and security in East Gojjam, examining local perceptions, and suggesting targeted interventions. These interventions are crucial for fostering community development, promoting resilience, and ensuring long-term peace in a region with rich cultural and historical significance.

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore the peace and security dynamics and identify challenges and opportunities for promotion sustainable community development through inclusive and effective strategies in the Amhara Regional State, East Gojjam Zone.

1.3.2 Specific Objective of the Study

- ✓ To explore the perceptions of community members regarding peace and security in the East Gojjam Zone.

- ✓ To identify the main challenges affecting peace and security in East Gojjam Zone
- ✓ To examine the role of civil society organizations, cultural gatekeepers, elders, religious leaders and government authorities in promoting peace and security.
- ✓ To explore opportunities for enhancing community development in peace and security initiatives.

1.4 Research Question

- ✓ What are the major challenges to peace and security in the East Gojjam Zone, as perceived by community members?
- ✓ How do social, economic, and political factors influence the peace and security dynamics in the zone?
- ✓ What roles do the government, elders, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and cultural gatekeepers play in fostering peace and security?
- ✓ What opportunities exist for improving community development through peace and security initiatives?

1.5 Significance of the Study

By addressing particular community evolution chances and challenges in the area of peace and security measures, this study contributed importantly to our understanding of the moral force of peace and protection in the East Gojjam Zone of Amhara Regional State. Furthermore, the field has supply useful information for improving the ontogenesis of sustainable biotic communities in the target region. By filling cracks in the literature on the regional plan of attack way of life to peace building, it enhances the consistency of noesis and offers hard-nosed counsel for policymakers, community leaders' civil guild system, senior, cultural ostiary, spiritual leaders, and makes grow practitioners. It might also exalt another prof to conduct more research and analysis on this or tie in subject, promoting a more than in-profundity examination of this crucial study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aims to examine the dynamics of peace and security in the East Gojjam Zone of Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. The study focuses on how peace and security challenges and opportunities affect community development in the intended area. In particular, it emphasizes problems like resource distribution, governance, and ethnic conflicts while looking into ways to promote sustainable development in the Zone. The research is limited to this geographic Zone and analyses relevant socio-economic and political factors.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This proposition has been organized into five chapters. Chapter one put up the background, problem statement, worldwide and specific objectives of the study, significance of the sketch, scope, and constitution of the study. To provide the background and linguistic context of the probe, Chapter Two probes relevant literature and theoretical frameworks and models. In Chapter Three, the study methodology is discussed in detail along with the research design, data collection puppet, try-out approach, and data interpretation method. This format ensures an orderly flow by guiding readers through the development of the investigation and its essential components. Chapter Four focuses on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the main findings of the study and provides conclusions and recommendations. This format ensures a logical flow, guiding readers through the development and key components of the research.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Understanding the peace and security dynamics in the East Gojjam Zone of Amhara Regional State is important to addressing the region's problems and promoting community development in term social, economic and political aspects. The relationship between peace and security and community development in this specific location has not received much attention, in the face of the circumstance that these topics have been the focus of several studies. This study emphasis at how peace and security dynamics impact maintainable community development in the Zone, with a focus on addressing the unique opportunities and challenges for local and national development.

2.2. Peace and Security Dynamics in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa

Three main components are discovered by the idea of micro dynamics. It looks at activities and interactions at this scale and focuses on a micro-level examination involving individual parts. This method questions established theories in international relations and is more in line with improvements in anthropology and sociology. Micro-dynamics look for to capture the complex actions and phenomena occurring at the individual level within peace and conflict contexts.

The Horn of Africa is historically plagued by significant conflict, ranging from guerrilla warfare to conventional wars between states (Clapham, 2017). Ethnic conflicts in the Horn of Africa have been mostly projecting, leading to the representation of developing states controlled by specific ethnic groups (Markakis, 1994). Today, most regions in developing countries like Ethiopia faces persistent socioeconomic, political and environmental disasters, and any improvements persist breakable, as exemplified by Ethiopia's current situation. In overall, the scope of security challenges in the Horn of Africa surpasses that of any other African regions (Cheru, 2023).

Peace, security and development have demonstrated to be extreme more complicated than expected, to building peace an unattainable aim for a large portion of post-colonial Africa. A arrangement of internal and

external variables is to blame for this struggle. Two opposing images of Africa have dominated public perceptions: one of a dangerous region characterized by on-going conflicts and peace insecurity, instability, economic lacks, and poverty and another of a romanticized Africa that is celebrated over and over with wildlife safaris and films that highlight its natural beauty (Francis, 2008).

Historically, the Horn of Africa has been characterized by unpredictability and repeated violent fights, conflicts and poverty. After few years, political changes started to give rise to hopefulness about a fresh direction to democracy and stability in the horn of Africa. The election of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed who is the current president of Somalia in 2017 raised cautious hopes that he would guide the nation toward greater stability and advancement alongside the confrontational organization al-Shabaab. Following extensive demonstrations, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed from Ethiopia immediately began implementing political reforms, including a landmark peace deal with Eritrea that greatly reduced regional volatility and risks of conflict. Similar to this, Sudan entered a period of transition in 2019 with the revolution of Omar al-Bashir, which raised expectations for a more stable and democratic future for the area (FOI Studies in African Security, 2023).

Ethiopia has been a stabilizing factor in the Horn of Africa and played a significant role for the region of Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is still politically random despite its strength and weakness, especially after implementing ethnic federalism in 1991. Initially intended to ease historical prejudices and ethnic tensions among the citizens in the nation, this program has instead increased ethnic consciousness raising and caused widespread interethnic violence (Semir, 2019). Since 2017, tensions over identity, resources, and boundaries have been intensified due to the politicization of ethnic identities and territorial disputes, which has resulted in increased violence. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed responded by enacting political changes in 2018 that included initiatives to advance peace, unity, and respect for one another. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his successful negotiation of a peace deal with Eritrea (Semir, 2019).

2.3. Ethnic Federalism and Its Impact on National Stability

The term ethnicity is has many meanings and complicated and to defined in context of political science, sociology, and anthropology. Because, it includes both subjective and objective components and covers social processes, cultural constructions and individual and group identities. According to Yang, ethnicity is subjectively defined as a person's feeling of affiliation with a specific group whither in blood and relatives. In an objective sense, it includes solidarity, historical memories, shared descent, and cultural constituents. This twin viewpoint emphasizes how ethnicity plays a dynamic and significant role in social relationships and communication. Followers of ethnic federalism shower it as a means of bringing multi-ethnic Ethiopia together, while detractors see it as a system that could in the long run cause the nation to fall apart (Conflict Trends, 2019)

Inter-ethnic disputes happen when various ethnic groups have irregular connections or establish relationship with one another. Conflict happens when two or more people track opposing or different agendas. As example the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups in Rwanda and the Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups in South Sudan are two prominent instances of interethnic conflict in the history of Africa. Due to Ethiopia's multi-ethnic makeup, ethnic and political conflicts have arisen there; before to 1991, these conflicts were fuelled by the monopolization of governmental resources and authority (Asmare, 2020).

The Ethiopia's 1995 Constitution adopted ordered classification system. According to Edward Allworth, the foundation of this Soviet system was chosen reflections rather than democratic or egalitarian philosophies. These ideas are reflected in Ethiopia's ethnic federalism, which uses a multi-tiered territorial organization model based on Soviet procedures (Halabo, 2019).

When properly implemented the federalism concept, it may guarantee political stability and order, claims Dr. Bekalu (2017). However, instability has resulted in Ethiopia consider as a result of self-serving political leaders politicizing ethnic identity and dignity. This is proved by the dominant party system, budgetary policies and the organization of federal states, all of which intensify ethnic disputes. Depoliticizing human

variety, human right and instituting a multi-party, non-ethnic democracy are proposed as long-term solutions to these fundamental problems in order to promote stability and growth nation.

Acceptance may be troubled by cultural and religious views that face the secularism or gender equality tenets of peace education. Program implementation may be disadvantaged by opposition from traditional paths and religious leaders (Barber, 2023). Moreover, unstable security, conflict and intermittent violence in post-conflict, cultures may produce dangerous conditions that make peace education to be negative. Such programs need stability to succeed, but ongoing instability makes long-term success more difficult (Miller & Reynolds, 2022).

To ensure community-based sustainability importantly be contingent its needs to thorough capacity building and different trainings. Because local and national institutions may be destabilized, it is imperative to capitalise different resources/1in government capacity building initiatives in areas that are fragile or affected by violence. Furthermore, by interrelating and learning from other communities, one can cultivate horizontal social capital, which guarantees that the advantages of peace building transcend specific communities (Haider, 2009).

Ethiopia has a long lengthy history of protection its independence, incapacitating foreign dominance and retaining its sovereignty makes it a popular symbol of African resistance. In the past, it has been marked by internal discord, war, and starvation. Ethiopia is significant because it is the longest-standing independent state in continent of Africa. The establishment of the Ethiopian state, however, is still up for question. Though some academics contend internal colonization led to its construction, others see it as a process of engagement and inclusion motivated by internal power struggles (Baweke, 2015).

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia F.D.R.E recognized ethnic contention as a central political issue and officially lunched ethnic federalism in its 1994 Constitution. The Constitution gave regional governments the authority to govern themselves without interference, which includes creating their own constitutions, managing local affairs and pursuing political, social, and economic objectives. Particularly, the

right of nations, nationalities, and peoples to self-determination including secession if certain conditions are met is unquestionably enshrined in Article 39 of the Constitution (Aalen, 2002).

According to Baweke (2015) asserts that the degree to which subunits mandate more autonomy from the national government and representation in national governance frequently shapes federalism. The functioning of autonomy and representation in different federations is predisposed by both informal and constitutional variables. Federalism is a instrument for allocating territorial power and managing interactions between various groups, even though it is not a uniform system. Federations have important characteristics and elements that set them apart from other types of governance, even though their applications vary.

2.4. Concept of Ethnic conflicts

Ethnic conflict is the term used to define disagreements between various ethnic groups in one nation, frequently built on territorial, cultural, political, or economic concerns. There are many concerns such as human rights abuses, damage, and a considerable death toll are all possible outcomes of these conflicts, which can occasionally turn into internal conflicts., (Ibrahim, 2016).

According to Hegre et al. (1999), Ethnic conflict in developing countries, frequently results from political criticisms and violent opportunity. Historical burdens, socioeconomic difficulties, problems with government administration, perceived threats to cultural identity, and educational systems are some of the factors that contribute to these disputes. Although ethnicity especially in developing countries like Ethiopia played a significant role to ethnic conflict peace insecurity. Bush (1997) highlighted that ethnicity does not always result in conflict and peace insecurity. Rather, it is frequently politicized and mobilized in the context of current conflicts, highlighting its meaning as a tool rather than a cause.

2.5. Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Peace and Development

The idea of peace building and peace security is an argumentative one, with explanations ranging from "positive peace" which addresses underlying issues and advancing justice, equity, and reconciliation, and "negative peace" which shows the absence of war. Without contingent or applying international peace operations, many scholars describe peace building as measures taken by national or international actors to

institutionalize peace, including the absence of armed conflict and a certain level of political participation (PI Blue Papers, 2009).

The accomplishment of Ethiopia's democratic reform path, which has been in place since 2018, is contingent on settling important arguments through national discussions. The main goals of these discussions are to promote peace and security in each area, manage political changes, and settle disagreements. However, they have encountered many obstacles such as hostility between political parties, ethnic conflicts, discriminatory structures, a vague plan, and bias in involvement. These obstacles make it more and more difficult for national discussions to create sustainable peace and security in the nation (Birhanie, 2021).

In the region of Horn of Africa to experience conflict peace problem and insecurity driven by issues such as poor governance, corruption, ethnic marginalization, and poverty. Many scholars underline the need for grassroots and marginalize people empowerment and bottom-up peace building strategies to address these challenges. Integrating regional collaboration and indigenous values like tolerance and collaboration could enhance sustainable peace and security efforts. The role of grassroots actors in conflict management and peace building dialogues is critical to achieving lasting stability and security in sustainable peace in the region (Debele, 2018).

Imaginations to promote peace have gained acquisition in the early 1990s, but their efficacy and efficiency have been questioned. Development has initiated to be securitized, with security taking precedence over all-encompassing peace building. But instead of avoiding difficulties, multilateral efforts are changing to deal with them head-on, which offers a chance to revitalize global cooperation for sustainable development (Stan, 2004).

The broader effects of conservation deterioration on peace, security, development and stability are meaningfully shaped by the circumstance of the land other opportunities. Protecting the environment can start cycles of recovery that result in peace and stability since land affects the social, economy, political, human rights, and empowerment. The 2030 Agenda challenges the outdated idea of a trade-off between development and wildlife by highlighting the interconnectivity of global systems. This trajectory implies that

development and environmental conservation can coexist peacefully, which will benefit the earth and human welfare (Mastrojeni, G. (2017).

2.6. Community Development in Conflict Zones

The concept of "community" is considered as a catalyst for development and incorporates different social phenomena, including symbols, beliefs, ideologies, location, common culture and organizations (Cohen, 1985). It indicates both a "social unit" and "forms of social bonds or sentiments," taking empirical and normative magnitudes (Minar & Greer, 1970). Though its normative component emphasizes features like cohesion, togetherness, cooperation and group effort. This romanticized view frequently ignores the existence of rivalries, tensions, and conflicts inside communities (Strand & Toje, 2003).

Community-Driven Development (CDD) is a participative method that gives local governments and its citizens more power by giving them investment resources and decision-making role. Because public institutions are frequently weak and limited in conflict or post-conflict situations, this strategy places a strong emphasis on participatory planning, accountability and learning. CDD strengthens linkages between the state and residents and promotes social cohesiveness in fragmented areas (Kuehnast, 2006).

The importance of collaborations between local citizen and government authorities agencies is emphasized by the CDD method. However, challenges may occur such as government institutions commitment, poor communities, inadequate institutional ability might make it difficult for these partnerships to grow in crisis situations. Some initiatives aim to discourse this by enhancing the capacities of local governance or including government high officials in community councils (Strand & Toje, 2003).

Most of the time numerous divisions are focus of a community-based methods to peace building tasks, which can be used for both smaller-scale and larger national initiatives. These approaches regularly seek to incorporate numerous actors, change relationships and support broader peace initiatives. Traditional justice and reconciliation print and broadcast media and communication efforts, socioeconomic recovery, political parties, heritage and cultural preservation, and community-based policing are a few examples. Through both

useful services and communication across conflict boundaries, these initiatives promote peace by emphasizing social capital, cooperation, and reintegration (Haider, 2009).

Goal of community-based peace building to promote participatory governance, empowerment, and the process of social renewal. Important issues include ensuring inclusivity without elite capture, empowerment not just direction, diverse socio-economic groups, and changing community dynamics. Performance Security: These approaches may also struggle to ensure broad participation whilst maintaining social cohesion in polarized post-conflict environments. Too often, the mismatch between material needs and social transformation and poorly designed programs hinders success (Haider).

2.7. Understanding local conflicts and their socio-economic drivers

Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004a; Fearon and Laitin 2003a pioneered systematic empirical studies of conflict. These studies were primarily concerned with identifying the correlates of civil war, and one of their most salient findings was the negative association between conflict and per capita income. Although frequently read as causal, this relation deserves critical treatment and alternative views. We shall discuss these interpretations, and the robustness of the findings in this section.

Low per capita income; 39% poverty; 17.5% unemployment. Low productivity limits agricultural output, contributing 42% of GDP but employing 80% of the labour force. Despite the various difficulties, Ethiopia has witnessed rapid economic growth and has averaged an annual growth of 10.6% since 2004, including infrastructure and agricultural commercialization, and export diversification. Foreign direct investment, most notably from emerging economies such as China, has also fueled growth. Ethiopia's GDP (PPP) was just \$40.76 billion in 2004 to \$118.2 billion in 2013 (Mulugeta, 2014).

Conflict reduces per capita GDP growth by 2.2% per year (Collier and Hoeffler, 2007) and 18% of GDP in military expenditures in conflict and post-conflict. Gates et al. Conflict also has a negative impact on GDP per capita (2012). According to Polachek and Sevastianova (2010), rapid warfare and conflicts within undemocratic, low-income African nations have a more substantial effect on adverse economic growth.

Moreover, conflict tends to shrink capital-intensive industries, such as manufacturing, while labor-intensive sectors, such as subsistence agriculture, may expand.

Economic similarity may be a pretext for competing with others for limited resources like jobs, land, or business opportunities, defying the more traditional Marxist perspective that emphasized problems of class struggle. These are conflicts where like faces off against like, as in competition between economically similar entities. For example, Bernie Sanders (Klein 2015) gave an interview in 2015 that showed openness with the threat of open borders accompanied by competition over scarce opportunities. This shows how the trend of economic similarity has the potential to lead to conflict outside of the class-based fights.

Collier argues that conflicts affect economic growth negatively because of the destruction of the infrastructure, disruption of activities, a decrease in investments, and limited government spending on health services. Hoeffler, on the other hand, adds that the effects of conflicts may last even a decade after it has ended and include reduced investment and trade, lesser value additions by different sectors, and lower consumption. All these effects result in economic growth being stifled. Surprisingly, nations afflicted by long periods of war struggle with economic growth for an extended period of time after the war has ended.

As underscored in various social security and development journals, security is the most important enabler of socioeconomic development, which makes reducing poverty an essential element for broad and deep growth. This kind of growth allows poor people to actively participate in and benefit from economic growth and sry women politics and for social and economic inclusion; broad and deep national security is regarded as an essential in determining economic development and economic security strengthens national security, which is critical to development. (Eneji & Eneji, 2020).

Conflict can be classified into two: internal and external. The external conflict includes all kinds of disputes which get arisen between the countries e.g on international boundaries. On the contrary internal conflict encompasses all issues that plague a state including things like civil wars, terrorism, inter-ethnic, inter-religious, or inter-communal violence and crimes (Ghani & Iyer, 2010).

The scale of violent conflict, more notably civil strife, puts a damper on economic growth especially in low-

income countries where there exists a high propensity for civil wars, in fact, much of the fighting is internal. Evidence indicated that economic growth, measured by per capita GDP, drops down by 2.2% annually during civil wars, meaning at the end of the usual seven-year conflict, income is reduced by approximately 15% resulting in deepening poverty. This leads to the concept of a “conflict trap,” where the interdependence of poverty and conflict makes it exceedingly difficult to escape the informative vicious cycle (Bagwitz et al, 2008).

Military conflict can shatter economies by damaging infrastructure, people, and means of subsistence, but it can also pose chances for certain people. Local authorities like warlords could exploit the lack of central control during civil wars by capturing land and assets, charging protection fees, and monopolizing trade routes. These individuals are able to flourish in conflict regions, where conflict and patronage enables them to hold power, and even profit from the chaos they cause (Love, 2009).

Along with economic development, social development is offered a considerable boost when peace and security exists, as people need to do less worry about safety and stability. When people embrace the option of peaceful coexistence, attention shifts to reconstruction of vital physical infrastructure, enhancing living standards, and economic activities. Such efforts are especially important after a war when recovery and reconstruction are important to achieve long-term development (Kim & Muller, 2023).

2.8. Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building Strategies in Ethiopia

Conflict resolution is the process of negotiation and management of a conflict. Conflict management and negotiation are the two main aspects of it. Earlier research (Pavone 2007) detailed non-violent approaches to resolving disputes. It must focus on the root causes of the conflict and act on them. It is understood as mechanisms and processes that assist in the peaceful resolution of disputes. The resolution of group conflicts relies heavily on active communication and collective negotiation by group members (Damtew & Ejigu, 2022).

Ethiopia is one of the countries with diverse ethnic groups and has developed several indigenous conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peacebuilding mechanisms. These systems are envisioned to

promote peaceful coexistence and establish community ties after conflict. The inclusive, sustainable, and traditional strengths of Indigenous practices are fundamental for building sustained peace (Genaa & Jarrab, 2023)

In Africa, indigenous societies conceptualize conflict resolution through personal, relational, structural and cultural values. Elders, respected for their wisdom, facilitate these processes, bringing stability and order. Endowed with local roots and orally transmitted, these mechanisms enhance reconciliation rather than the use of formal court systems (Genaa & Jarrab, 2023).

Traditional tribal negotiation techniques have relied on councils of respected elders to mediate and resolve disputes, explored in other submissions on the Amhara region. Called the “Amare” councils, these elders will draw on their wisdom and established rules of arbitration called “Kuna” to adjudicate conflicts, from petty disputes to serious homicides. As for meeting for the first time, central locations like the riverside the councils scaled down to kebele and woreda levels to ensure safety and access to legal protections. Kebele committees are responsible for addressing local problems, while the woreda-level councils manage complex matters, creating justice and sustainable peace building (Tesfaye, 2021).

Many research findings shows that women playing a significant role in conflict resolution within Ethiopian traditional experience. They indirectly support peace initiatives by offering direction, education, and encouragement of harmony within families and communities. In some places, women are viewed as symbols of peace, and they lend support to established groups like "Ye Shakoch Chilot." African and Ethiopian communities have been greatly impacted by these organizations, which address judicial inadequacies and corruption in state courts. Some of their components have even been explicitly included into the state legal system (Bayu, 2020).

To become an elder in Wollo, a person must experience various life stages and possess the wisdom to discern what is good and harmful. Elders people or community representatives should be able to think critically, mature, intelligent, and logical. One must have moral qualities in order to be inducted into elderhood. Full

elder status, which involves being recognized as a shimagle or elder and denotes the acknowledgment of one's full personhood, can be attained after marriage and reaching one's forties (Mohammed, 2018).

2.9. The Impact of Inter Ethnic Conflicts on Local Communities and Development

Causing keen suffering for the great unwashed in developing body politic, differences of opinion have brought electronegative economic and societal growth, such as increased expiry charge per unit, infrastructural demolition, and political instability. These elements have the potential to block economic expansion, deter investment, and produce a "dispute trap, " which puddle reclamation hard. Public budget are also impacted by conflicts since they raise military spending and scale down tax reception. Even after a conflict has cease, this encroachment can all the same hinder efforts at general maturation (Mollaw, 2023).

There are theoretical queries on the result of regional ethnic conflicts on peacemaking, community engagement, and permissiveness. These disputes often leave behind negative emotions like anger, rancor, and jealousy in a multicultural state like Ethiopia. These long-simmer disputes could abruptly explode into public altercations. Local communities of interest have a critical role in repairing peace, particularly in an arena where tenseness perseveres, if endeavours to restore peace abide by heathen differences of opinion are to be sustained.

Fight often disproportionately affects women, both directly as victims and indirectly through the dislocation of mob and social structures. Women and girls have more potential to experience sexual assault, which can have tenacious-term social and economic burdens like marginalization, unemployment, and poverty. To Boot, tykes who find violence as they grow up may be more prone to employ force themselves

In the past, Amhara's neighboring communities have coexisted peacefully, with sporadic differences of opinion in the first place resulting from rivalry for limited resources. Beyond competition for resourcefulness, cultural customs like pagan slaying for pride and ill fame step up disputes, further the rhythm of retaliation, and ruin relationships. Conflict moral forces have shifted since the ethno-regional administrative organization was implemented in 1991. Biotic Communities, including pastoralists and

agropastoralists, have clashed over an orbit of problems, such as cultural customs and territorial boundaries, inside the Amhara region, which borders an identification number of former regions.

2.10. Three Common Perceptions about Conflict

Perception 1: Conflict Declines with Per Capita Income

The inverse link between per-head income and civic war is an unwashed result in engagement economics research. Disciplines like Fearon & Laitin (2003) and Collier & Hoeffler (1998, 2004) have shown this minus correlation, which accentuates the connection between poverty and the state of war. Withal, there are make-up payoffs with version, such as the speculation of inverse causation and missing divisors like international accompaniment for the authoritarian governing body. This contact is further complicated by odd economic development, which take turns between increasing the monetary value of struggle and nourishing competitors (Ray & Esteban, 2017).

Perception 2: Conflict Is Driven by Economic Difference

Economic inequality, in which money is focused among elites at the disbursement of larger, poorer people, has historically been a mutual cause of revolutions. Rising inequality and its connection to social unrest are spotlighted by recent research (e.g., Piketty, 2014). Conflict, however, can also arise when groups with comparable economic background knowledge vie over at once contend resources, such as land or employment. Such competition is sometimes organized using ethnicity as a marking, which aligns hoi polloi into react grouping (Ray & Esteban, 2017).

Perception 3: Conflicts in Developing Countries Are Based on Ethnic Differences

In postcolonial rising nations, where much warfare has been characterized by ethnic, geographic, and spiritual divisions, unlimited economic division battles are actually rarified. Horowitz (1985) and Fearon (2006) avow that cultural rebellions are unwashed in Asia and Africa and those non-economic indicators such as ethnicity are frequently adopted for political or economic use. Economic part further ejection and rivalry for resourcefulness in these conflicts, which immix musician and primordial stances (Ray & Esteban, 2017).

2.11. Theoretical Framework

2.11.1. Conflict theory

In order to argue that conflict is a necessary part of societal variation rather than a destructive forcefulness-out, Prayogi (2023) necessitates that battle possibilities save a critical review article on structural functionalism. Concord to this perspective, the difference is an instinctive aspect of societal growth and ought to be seen as necessary for progress sooner than being set down. Even if the discrepancy can promote electropositive adjustment and cover societal injustice, it nevertheless presents a threat. Unresolved, it may become prejudiced and demonstrate the triangular lineament of battle in seductive societal settings.

Szczecińska-Musielak (2023) insists that Lewis Coser's conflict hypothesis, which was greatly touched on by Georg Simmel's writings, spotlight engagement as a normal and utile ingredient of social bodily structure. According to Coser, conflict is a necessary component of the social chronicle, and civilization throws "refuge-valve" construction to channel and release tensions. While conflict can be a force for social stability, suppressing it can lead to larger, more destructive confrontations. Coser's approach underscores that the intensity of conflict is influenced by the perceived legitimacy of power divisions within society.

2.11.2. Theories of Primordialist Accounts of Ethnic Conflict

Allot to primordial musical themes, nationalities, and ethnic groups let their roots in long-suffer customs and opinions that are tied to biological features and territorial identity. Standardized to hereditary ties, these bonds foster a sense of affinity within organizations. Advocates of this idea argue that institutional, political, and economic factors sooner than ethnicity are the primary causes of ethnic strife. Since political decisions frequently drive conflicts and ethnicity is used as a marker to separate supporters from opponents, the term "ethnic war" is seen as simplistic (Cordell & Wolff, 2009).

2.11.3. Theories of Ethnic Mobilization

Peter Vermeersch examines the development of political science estimation of ethnic mobilization, particularly in Wake Island of the ethnic state of war of the 1990s and the cultural resurgence in Europe in the 1970s. At first, ethnic politics were seen to be transitory or inconsequential, and their demise was

anticipated as a result of liberal democracy or modernization. Vermeersch breaks the ongoing ethnic mobilization tripper hypothesize into four lieu, though: contest (strategy power conflict), reactive ethnicity (tying ethnicity to economic asperity), culturally (reduce on deal note value), and political process (institutional and political context). These perspectives provide a variety of positions on heathen militarization processes.

2.11.4 Conceptual Framework

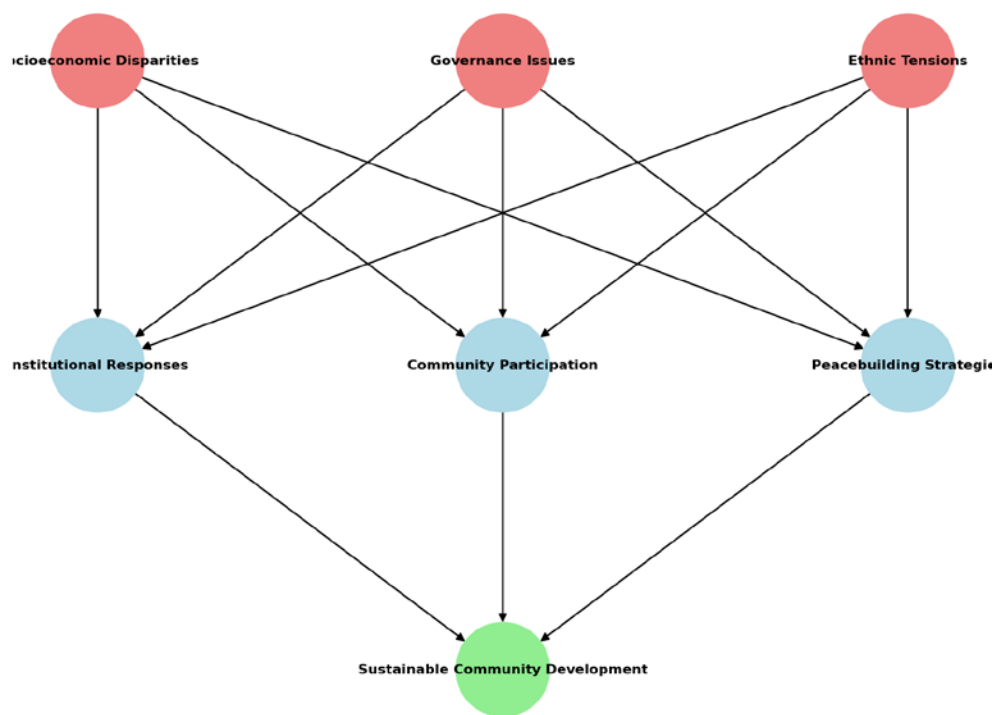


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Peace and Security Dynamics in East Gojjam ZoneThe figure illustrates the interplay between key variables affecting sustainable community development. The independent variables socioeconomic disparities, governance issues, and ethnic tensions serve as primary drivers of instability. These factors influence intervening variables, including institutional responses, community participation, and peacebuilding strategies, which act as mechanisms for mitigating or exacerbating the challenges. The dependent variable, sustainable community development, is the ultimate goal, achievable through effective mediation of these conflict-related elements. Arrows indicate the

directional influence among the variables, emphasizing the need for a multidimensional approach to peace building in East Gojjam Zone of Amhara Regional State.

Chapter Three

3. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to explore the peace and security dynamics, challenges, and opportunities in the East Gojjam Zone of the Amhara Regional State. A qualitative approach is the most suitable method for gaining a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the effectiveness and challenges associated with peace and security measures from the perspective of local citizens (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This methodology allows for an in-depth exploration of socio-political, economic, and cultural factors that influence stability and conflict resolution in the region. Through focus groups discussion, key informant interview and interactive notice, the written reports receive a thorough discernment of the socio-political, economic, and cultural component that impacts the dynamics of relief and foregone conclusion in the area.

3.2. Study Area

The East Gojjam Zone, one of Amhara Regional State's major Zona, would be the site of this research study. This region is substantially-known for its interracial rural and urban setting, complicated social structures, and varied residential sphere with cultural diversities. For eras, the zone was the place of political fight, socioeconomic inequality, and latent heathenish animosity, these has brought negative impact to East Gojjam's peace and security government issue. Key prospects for residential district maturation and long-term peace and security depend on an apprehension of these dynamics. In guild to capture the mountain chain of point of view onthese headaches, the surveys concentrated on receive brainstorming from several East Gojjam Zone bomber-regions.

3.3. Sampling

The study employedpurposive sampling to select participants who can provide valuable insights into the peace and security dynamics, challenges, and opportunities in the East Gojjam Zone. Key informants, including religious leaders, cultural gatekeepers, elders, community leaders, local government

representatives, members of development groups, and civil society organizations (CSOs) has been chosen based on their roles, influence, expertise, and lived experiences within their communities. This approach ensures that participants are knowledgeable and actively engaged in the dynamics under investigation, allowing for a comprehensive and contextually relevant understanding of the factors influencing community development (Patton, 2015).

3.4. Sample Size

This study included a sample of 60 participants from diverse backgrounds to ensure comprehensive insights into the peace and security dynamics of the East Gojjam Zone. The sample consisted of religious leaders, cultural gatekeepers, elders, community leaders, representatives of local government authorities, members of development organizations, and CSOs working on peace and security projects. To maintain a manageable and effective data collection process, the study incorporated 20 key informants for in-depth interviews and four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), each consisting of 6 participants. This approach ensures a balanced mix of individual perspectives and collective discussions, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities in community peace and security efforts. The final sample size determined by data saturation, the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from additional interviews or discussions.

3.5. Method of Data Collection

The data points for this discipline collected through semi-structure interviews and focus group discussions. Focus group discussion give-and-take helps group-level perceptiveness and provides a platform for participants to interact and hash out challenges and opportunities related to peace and security. Field observations also conducted to gather contextual data on peace of mind and security measures conditions. The combining of these methods provided rich, qualitative data to treat the research objectives and questions and reliability.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

Given that this study employs a qualitative research approach, the data analysis followed thematic analysis, a widely recognized method for identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data collected from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and field observations transcribed and systematically coded to identify recurring themes related to community perceptions, challenges, and opportunities in peace and security dynamics. Thematic analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of qualitative data by organizing it into meaningful categories, ensuring that key insights emerge from participants' narratives (Nowell et al, 2017). This analytical approach is essential in understanding the roles of local organizations, trust-building mechanisms, and development strategies, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced interpretation of peace and security dynamics in the study area.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

This subject field is stick to ethical standards in research to ascertain the rights and welfare of players are abide by. Key ethical circumstances include:

Informed Consent: Participants have been in full informed about the purpose, procedure, and potential risk of infection of the bailiwick before they agree to participate. The consent acquired from all participants of this research.

Confidentiality: The player's info kept confidential. All data points anonymized, and identifiers were linked to the findings of the research.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the field of study is voluntary, and participants get the right to withdraw at any point without penalty and autocracy.

Compliance for Persons: The inquiry channeled with respect for the player's cultural average and values, guaranteeing that no scathe is produced for them.

Non-discrimination: The inquiry ensured inclusivity and voids any form of discrimination or bias based on ethnicity, gender, educational background and socioeconomic status and political participation

ChapterFour

4. Data Findings, Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The chapter offers a detailed thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the field as part of this study on peace and security dynamics in East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region. The data were collected from four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and eight Key Informant Interviews (KIIs conducted among different community members, local leaders, government actors, and civil society organizations).

The responses were thematically coded based on the research questions and goals of the research. The presentation interweaves participant voices with accompaniment from supporting literature and theoretical concepts, including Conflict Theory, Structural Violence, Ethnic Federalism, and Community-Based Peace building. This approach does not merely provide an abridgment of community voices, but interpretation at a greater level of the underlying drivers, manifestations, and possible solutions for conflict in the region.

To ensure that the participants' privacy is upheld, individual responses are anonymized and merely referred to as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc., while the focus group discussions are referred to as FGD 1, FGD 2, etc.

4.2 Changes in the State of Peace and Security

The respondents in both the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions largely agreed that the peace and security situation in East Gojjam had taken a radical turn for the worse, particularly over the past two years. Most recalled how life in the region, which was once marked by relatively peaceful existence, became one of fear, fragmentation and violence.

One local elder (Respondent 1) noted that, *"Before, we used to congregate freely in mosques, in the bazaars, and at community events. But now people fear to go out. You don't know who is bearing weapons or what may happen tomorrow."* This was resounded in all FGDs, most notably FGD 1 and FGD 3, where participants noted extensive disruptions to usual life, including closure of schools, roadblocks, internally displaced families and interruption of public services.

The situation was worst in rural kebeles, where the government vacated positions to non-state armed

groupslake Fano groups. The respondents normally indicated that the government presence had become spotty, with some towns patrolled by the federal army while rural towns were accessible to armed resistance groups or simply lawless.

Theoretically, these occurrences could be accounted for by Conflict Theory that posits the result of imbalanced power relations, competition over scarce resources and state failure to address underlying grievances normally leads to social unrest. State collapse of authority in zones of East Gojjam supports the argument of structural violence whereby structured inequality and exclusion lead to visible conflict and terror in the population.

Alemayehu (2022) research also supports these accounts, implying that recent decentralization efforts and the demobilization of regional Special Forces made some areas susceptible to political and ethnic violence. People's day-to-day lives in East Gojjam epitomize a broader national trend of security fragmentation whereby local administration no longer assures security or stability.

4.3 Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Insecurity

Communities typically complained of a heavy psychological burden, being perpetually in a state of fear, suspicion, and trauma. As reported by one respondent in FGD 2: *"When you see a man with a gun, you don't ask if he is government or Fano. You just hide."* The quote above indicates how boundaries between safety and danger have dissolved, resulting in emotional exhaustion.

The respondents named insecurities on a daily basis, including fear of being caught in the middle of fighting, harassment by soldiers or militia, or being falsely accused of political allegiances.

One local teacher (Respondent 3) stated, *"You feel undersurveillance the whole time. Even silence is politicized."* The populace was reportedly abandoning their line of work working as farmers, teachers, or traders to avoid being harmed or forced loyalty to either party.

According to Galtung's structural violence theory, such fear-caused displacement and economic crisis are the outcome of unseen forces of injustice, such as unaddressed political exclusion, ethnic polarization, and capricious rule. More importantly, this is also in line with approaches of human security that prioritize

safeguarding individuals first above state interests. In East Gojjam, the state's inability to secure freedom from fear has increasingly eroded public trust.

This is aligned with reports by Yeshitila (2023), who noted a rise in community trauma and withdrawal from public life in other Amhara hotspots. FGD 4 participants also noted how communal celebrations, religious festivals, and even weddings have been cut down not just due to economic hardship, but also for fear of unwanted attention or assault.

4.4 Causes of Conflict and Insecurity

Throughout all FGDs and interviews, respondents referred to a complex interplay of political, ethnic, economic, and generational factors contributing to the current insecurity. While some were rooted in age-old historical reasons, others were regarded as emerging trends motivated by state actions and structural neglect.

The meta-narrative was that of a feeling of marginalization of the Amhara as a group under the federal arrangement. Most of the participants spoke about the dissolution of the Amhara Special Forces as one of the major contributors to insecurity. In the words of Respondent 4, a former government employee, *"When our forces were disbanded without any obvious alternative, the community felt naked/unprotected. People turned to Fano not because they wanted to fight, but because they felt abandoned."*

This feeling of abandonment and forced vulnerability is linked to Conflict Theory, in the belief that ruling groups will suppress those who seek to challenge their dominance, causing marginalized groups to seek other avenues of defense or expression. The theory aligns with Coser's argument (1956) that conflict becomes inevitable when political power and economic opportunity are perceived as limiting or ethnically discriminatory.

The other widely cited explanation was ethnic federalism, a constitutional arrangement claimed by most of the respondents to institutionalize fragmentation. Respondents in FGD 1 and FGD 3 described how boundaries created by the administration have been the cause of tensions, especially in contested areas like Wolkait and Raya. Educator Respondent 5 declared: *"Ethnic federalism sounds good on paper, but in practice, it has become an instrument of exclusion people get evicted or attacked for being born on the wrong side of a map."*

This is resonated in literature by Ayalew (2019), who blames Ethiopia's ethnic federalism for "turning identities into weapons" and creating communal fears. There was concern raised by participants that pending issues of land, identity, and justice/1most particularly in conflict-ridden areas/1 are tinderboxes for violence.

In addition, participants also noted the following: growing alienation among young people, the majority of whom are not only perpetrators but also victims of violence. Youth unemployment, illiteracy, and intergenerational disillusionment were said to drive young people into armed groups. FGD 2 reiterated that *"the youth feel they have no future/1no jobs, no voice. So they carry guns to gain dignity."*

This is in line with structural violence theory, most notably defined by Galtung (1969), which emphasizes how the invisible social structures can deprive individuals of their dignity and potential. As youth become disillusioned with official structures, they may turn to informal structures of power such as militias in an effort to exert agency. Religious divisions and political faultlines were also noted, although to a lesser degree. These were largely considered to be secondary drivers, often employed by political players to advance bigger agendas.

4.5 Escalation and Impact of the Conflict

Participants described a predictable yet nonetheless terrifying pattern of the escalation of local tension into larger-scale conflict. Often it began with public protest or government pronouncement on the mess such as disarmament or border issues. When such was met by force or silence, frustration mounted.

Respondent 6, a kebele administrator says: *"When the government declared the disarmament, police and security forces retreated from several areas. In the absence of protection, armed youth groups took over, saying they would defend the people."*

Participants of FGD 4 described that such overrunning is primarily linked with the disruption of service provision, occupation of schools and health centers, and road blockade. More agro-production activities were hindered and each household had to vacate their residence. *"My neighbor's land is still empty. They fled last year when their son joined Fano, and no one heard from them since,"* declared one

participant from FGD 1.

Women and children remained disproportionately displaced and traumatized. Respondent 7, who is an activist in women rights, stated that sexual violence, early marriage, and child labour increased following the outbreak of the conflict. *"Girls are being married off younger now. Families feel it's safer than leaving them single with no security,"* she said.

This has been corroborated by Gebre (2021), who highlighted a similar trend in the other conflict-affected zones of northern Ethiopia. His paper demonstrated how conflict has heightened existing forms of gendered inequality, leaving women at a heightened risk of exploitation while undermining their influence in the decision-making structures within communities.

From an economic standpoint, participants reported inflated food prices, loss of income, and a complete breakdown of trade. Respondent 8, a trader, said, *"Before this crisis, I was freely going around to sell grain."/*¹ Now, there are roadblocks, taxes from militias, and no guarantee of returning alive." The human cost of the conflict was often cited as more damaging than the material losses. Many respondents mentioned the loss of social trust, the breakdown of neighbourly relations, and fear of betrayal as lasting effects.

This lens sees the East Gojjam case as a fundamental failure to ensure the most basic of human needs not just physical safety but food, health, education, and dignity. The effects are not just short-term dislocations but potentially intergenerational traumas, with families torn apart and communities torn asunder.

4.6 Roles and Challenges of Stakeholders in Peace building

In listing the measures that have been undertaken to end the long-standing conflict in East Gojjam, the participants identified a variety of actors: elders, religious figures, community-based groups, local government structures, and Fano commanders who are informal actors. These actors' capacity to contribute towards peace building, nevertheless, has largely been constrained by fragmentation, mistrust, and lack of coordination.

Traditionally, religious leaders and elders have had the monopoly on conflict resolution, referred to locally as *shinglina* (elder mediation). A local priest, Respondent 9, however, suggests that *"These traditional actors are*

no longer seen as neutral. Militias accuse elders of being government informants, and youth no longer listen to us like before."

This loss of formal institutions for managing conflict can be explained in terms of community-based peace building theory, highlighting local legitimacy and trust. Once these actors are seen as tainted politically or ethnically their ability to mediate is seriously undermined. As Lederach (1997) points out, peace builders must be rooted in the community but trusted by both parties in conflict something that is increasingly difficult to find in East Gojjam.

Participants also indicated that religious leaders, while respected sometimes, have consciously stayed away from mediation. In FGD 3, one participant stated: *"The church and mosque are the only venues where people still gather without fear if they take sides, they will lose that space."*

Government officials, though, were mostly regarded as doing nothing or being against them. Respondent 10, a youth member, claimed that "local authorities either don't have power or are afraid to do anything. The federal government only sends drones, not words." This statement was repeated across FGDs, especially where areas were experiencing direct military conflict.

Players decried the lack of inclusive platforms for internal voices. Peace processes, when initiated, were said to involve only select officials or party-leaders and not grassroots players or representatives from conflict zones. This contradicts bottom-up peace building paradigms, which assert that lasting peace must come from community ownership and not just top-down political deals.

4.7 Government and Civil Society Roles

The government's reaction to the crisis was characterized by participants as highly militarized and reactive, rather than preventive or dialogue-driven. The majority of interviewees portrayed the state as keen on reasserting control over land and crushing opposition, rather than engaging in tackling deep-seated grievances. Respondent 11, a government worker, stated, *"The government peace plan is to shut people up, not be heard by them."* This is in alignment with conflict repression theory, which assumes that state authorities focus on short-term domination at the expense of long-term reconciliation.

Some of the interviewees vented ire at civil society organizations (CSOs) for not being there or being ineffective, especially in rural kebeles. FGD 2 participants said that peacebuilding efforts tend to be urban-based, donor-sponsored. "They come, they do workshops, they depart the real combatants are never in the room," one participant quipped.

Nevertheless, some few key informants identified the potential of CSOs to mediate, lobby, and enable recovery that is not being utilized. Respondent 12, who is a leader of a CSO, suggested that "*with support and access, we could organize youth dialogues, trauma healing circles, and reintegration programs.*" This is in agreement with studies by Berhanu (2020), who argues that CSOs in Ethiopia can bridge the gap between government and grassroots if given the space and resources.

Some encouraging examples of joint initiatives were mentioned including relief food organization by religious groups and local NGOs. These were also described as disconnected and unsustainable. There remains an essential deficit in the absence of long-term peace infrastructure, especially in the excluded zones.

4.8 Challenges to Peace building

All the interviewees, both from the FGDs and key interviews, mentioned deep distrust, political polarization, and militarization of local forces as the longest-standing challenges to peace in East Gojjam. Even in places where a general desire for stability does exist, many people feel that the tools and channels for peaceful resolution are missing, ineffective, or unsafe to use.

Respondent 13, who had been a woreda council member, stated: "The biggest problem isn't lack of ideas it's lack of will. Every side feels that it can win with violence, so they discount the voices of peace."

This is in line with realist conflict theory, which posits that actors in a struggle for power tend to perceive concession-making as a sign of weakness, particularly if grievances are left pending. Most participants perceived efforts at dialogue as performativity, given that some peace meetings culminated in a lack of follow-through or implementation. As one of the FGD 4 respondents commented, "*They request ideas, we provide them but the guns continue firing.*"

The participants also discussed the institutional and legal barriers to peace building. The ethnic federalist

structure of the Ethiopian constitution was regularly argued as one of the causes of divide. Internal academic Respondent 14 argued: *"As long as the constitution allows regions to use land and ethnicity as tools of identity, we will forever have border and inclusion conflicts."*

This claim is most loudly supported by Merera (2018), who asserts that "ethnic federalism has laid the structural foundation for inter-group competition rather than cooperation." The respondents also agreed that Article 39 of the constitution, which allows self-determination and secession, inspires more fear and confusion than solidarity.

Finally, the lack of security protection for peace builders also presented a serious challenge. Elders whose voice criticism are threatened; CSOs are said to be politically motivated; women and young people's activists are labeled agitators. The lack of a safe and inclusive space for peace talks continues to hamper local solutions.

4.9 Role of Women and Youth in Peace building

The women, girls and youth of both the war and future peace processes were extremely complex and underdeveloped. Though they are among the most affected, their peace building roles are marginal, symbolic, or restricted to informal spaces.

Women, in the opinion of most participants, have largely played care roles, for instance, hosting displaced families, providing food or emotional support. However, they do not exercise much decision-making authority in formal peace negotiations. Respondent 15, a female community leader, described: *"We hold families together, we calm down our sons, but when it comes to formal meetings, we are not invited."*

This is what gender and peace building literature alludes to as the "helper not decision maker" problem, where women's input into rebuilding communities is acknowledged but not institutionalized. FGD 3 repeated this, with a further remark from a participant: *"We have women who can negotiate, who know all the players. But they are dismissed as being too emotional or too soft."*

Young people, on the other hand, were depicted both as drivers of conflict and as heroes of peace. All participants agreed that young people are not so much recruited to militias for ideology, but because they are unemployed, frustrated, and without sense. Respondent 16 articulated, *"When you give them guns, they feel*

they matter. That's more power than years of empty speeches."

But young people also have immense potential. Participants proposed launching youth dialogue forums, vocational training camps, and reconciliation courses for rehabilitating youth engaged in violence into the mainstream. These are echoed by Lederach (1997), who holds that incorporating youth is essential so that peace can be made sustainable because both victims and future generations would comprise youth.

4.10 Opportunities for Peace and Community Development

Despite challenges, all sources of data communicated optimism and offered solutions. One common theme was the need for a participatory national discussion. Respondent 17, a government official, asserted, *"The problem is not East Gojjam alone. Ethiopia has to sit together, all sides, and discuss openly."*

Individuals suggested that neutral third parties e.g., religious organizations, respected diaspora members or foreign mediators would help generate trust and accountability. *"We need someone who will listen to us without taking sides,"* said one FGD 1 respondent.

At the community level, respondents highly valued the reactivation of old arrangements such as Shimglina and Idir (burial and mutual support associations), which in the past have eased conflicts and promoted cohesion. But these need to be shielded from politicization so that they can continue to work.

Economic development was demanded as an imperative. Jobs, especially for young people, were proposed as the solution to violence. Investment in agriculture, infrastructure, small business ventures, and education was proposed by participants. *"Give the boys tractors, not bullets,"* said FGD 2, to near-unanimity. Social healing was also a prevalent topic. Most reported that there are traumatized individuals who have lost family, friends, or homes. Peace must therefore include psychosocial care, community rituals, and storytelling and forgiveness sites. This aligns with post-conflict reconciliation theory that asserts healing is a collective, emotional, and symbolic process.

4.11 Perceived Solutions and Community Visions for Peace

In summarizing their observations, participants as a group expressed a desire to end violence and reclaim their sense of community. Although in a peace process that is locally driven but nationally supported youth,

women, religious leaders, and civil society having defined roles.

Some of the suggestions most often heard were:

- Timely ceasefire and open negotiation
- Constitutional reform to reduce ethnic polarization
- Judicial responsibility for human rights abuses
- Investment in education and employment for young people
- Neutral space protection such as mosques and churches
- Peace committees at community level with actual decision-making authority

These concepts resonate a lot of the reviewed peace building literature in your proposal, specifically Lederach (1997) and Galtung (1969), both of whom emphasize grassroots empowerment and structural change.

4.12 Trust, Social Cohesion, and Fractured Relationships

Most severe and least remarked is the erosion of social cohesion and trust caused by the war in East Gojjam. People interviewed explained how the social relationships that had kept towns and villages safe for so long had been torn apart. Households are distrusted by neighbours, and old friends are viewed through political or ethnic lenses.

Respondent 18, a community elder, replied: *"Before this crisis, we never asked who was in which group. Now they whisper. They listen to what you're saying. We've lost the feeling of being one people."*

This fragmentation is also more than psychological. Respondents to FGD 3 described how commercial and cooperative relations between Kebeles have been ripped apart. Farmers no longer borrow one another's tools or swap labor, for fear of being perceived to be building alliances that will be misinterpreted. This deterioration in day-to-day cooperation has its parallels in social capital theory, which contends that peace is not just built through official diplomacy but also through webs of trust that function within civil society.

Putnam (2000), in his work on social capital, states that trust is strong in societies that are shock-resistant. In East Gojjam, the collapse of trust is both an indicator and a cause of profound insecurity. Rebuilding

cohesion must thus be an element in any peace process, e.g., through truth-telling, forgiveness, and social activities that unite individuals beyond politics or identity.

4.13 The Role of Education and Media in Peace and Security

Members were painfully aware of the contribution made by education and media to instigating and stopping conflict. They condemned the closure of schools, forced evacuation of teachers, and politicization of schools. Respondent 19, head of a secondary school, noted: *"When children cease to learn, they begin to listen to rumors. When we cease to teach, others begin to train them with guns."*

Some Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) noted that out-of-school youth are at greater risk of being recruited by armed groups. This validates peace education theory, which is based on the assumption that school can be an environment for teaching tolerance, civic duty, and conflict resolution.

Media, particularly social media, was considered a two-edged sword. While it has been used to uncover abuses and rally public action on one hand, it has been used to spread false information and hate messages, too, on the other hand. FGD 4 emphasized that *"young people follow YouTube more than their teachers now and not everything online brings peace."*

Academics, like Tefera (2022), suggested the integration of peace messaging into both the official curricula and internet platforms. This was similarly expressed by the participants in terms of media training, youth narration, and peaceful stories on community radio programs.

4.14 Traditional vs. Formal Peace Mechanisms

The other issue that arose was complementarity and tension between the formal institutions and traditional peace mechanisms. While some people have faith in religious leaders and elders, others pointed towards the need for formal justice in terms of the courts and police for cases of egregious abuses as well as to make a person accountable.

Respondent 20, a graduate in law, had said: *"Shimglina is fine for internal matters, but what about war crimes? What about rape or taking away land? We must have proper courts, not circles of reconciliation."*

This is reminiscent of the restorative justice vs. retributive justice conflict in peace studies. In FGD 2, the

informants discussed that in some local communities, elders could resolve small conflicts, but in great regional or big regional cases, such as contested lands or murders, their authority was deemed inadequate. The most common prescription was for the hybrid system, in which mechanisms traditional in nature address people-to-people conflict and formal institutions address institutionalized ones such as conflict over land, security violations, and corruption. This would comprise legal reform, community consultation, and peace jurisprudence training.

4.15 Community-Driven Peace Frameworks

Finally, participants drew community-led visions of sustainable peace, based on their lived realities and grounded in local context. Some remembered inspiring stories of churches providing forums for youths, women establishing food cooperatives for displaced families, or elderly persons organizing dialogue circles that prevented escalation of conflict in their villages.

These modest initiatives are pointing towards a bottom-up peace process based on community action rather than top-down political decision. Respondent 21 summarized: *"We cannot wait for Addis to save us. Peace must start here, with us."*

This is highly in sync with Lederach's "elective peace building" theory that states local citizens have the know-how, connections, and motive to resolve conflict if they are given room and assistance. The participants proposed a system that included:

- Peace committees in each kebele with cross-identity membership
- Youth cooperatives tied to employment creation and peer mediation
- Women's associations empowered to monitor early warning signs of conflict
- Training of religious leaders and elders in peace leadership and sensitivity to trauma
- Institutional link between woreda-level government and kebele-level activities

The attendees solidified that peace is not merely the lack of war, but justice, conversation, and opportunity here a notion well rooted in human security and structural approaches to peace building.

Chapter Five

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

This study sought to explore the evolving context of peace and security in East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region, where both national and local dynamics increasingly complicate. Based on four focus group discussions and eight key informant interviews among elders, community leaders, government officials, youth, and civil society organizations, a rich picture was painted one that is both deeply troubling and quietly promising.

Underpinning the evidence is a clear sense that the region, which had previously been perceived as relatively peaceful, has changed in its very essence. War, fear, and suspicion now characterize daily life for most. Respondents accounted for an accelerated erosion of the security situation, particularly after the disarmament of Amhara Special Forces. This change has made communities vulnerable and politically disenfranchised, with most seeking security from informal armed groups. The presence of federal military forces as well as non-state militias has created a feeling of ongoing tension, and schools have had to be shut down, families driven out, and basic services broken down.

Their root causes are multifaceted. Exclusion on the basis of identity, ethnic federalism, open border conflicts, political exclusion, and mass unemployment among the youth generate increasing grievances. These root causes of conflict are not only fueling conflict but also breaking down well-tried systems of mediation and trust. Destruction of people's confidence in institutions such as elders' councils and religious forums has removed society of fewer avenues for reconciliation through peace.

But amidst the conflicts, an unspoken but persistent peace was discovered by the research. Communities are not passive recipients. Many have taken small but important steps of informal conversation, mutual support, and collective survival to prevent violence from spiraling out of control. Women and youth, despite being regularly marginalized in formal ones, are playing invisible but indispensable roles in maintaining families and communities. There is a pervasive feeling that with proper support, direction, and room, communities themselves can guide us out of conflict.

5.2 Conclusions

The course of this research has highlighted a hard but grim fact: security and peace in East Gojjam cannot be earned by force, and wounds of conflict cannot be healed through policy declarations that have no reach beyond the grass roots. What is required is a reconsidering of peace one rooted in justice, participation and grass-roots action.

The study confirms that the crisis today is as much about trust or rather, its collapse. Trust in the government, the neighbors, the religious and cultural establishments, and even in the promises of peace itself. Any attempt

at peace without repairing this lost trust can be either superficial or fleeting.

At the same time, this research also points to the resilience and strength that still exist within communities. Folks genuinely are willing to rebuild, reconnect, and recover. People want to live together in peace, folks. This is not going to be easy, but it is possible. It will mean a sincere facing up to historical and current injustices, tough conversation between once-warring enemies, and a commitment to rebuilding on the principle of "people first" especially the most vulnerable.

Lastly, lasting peace in East Gojjam ought to go beyond the absence of conflict. It ought to be a restoration of dignity, of productive engagement, of justice, and of shared vision of tomorrow. These are not abstractions they are daily imperatives for people who simply desire nothing more than to live in security.

5.3 Recommendations

In the interest of aid to the path towards peace, the study posits a sequence of interconnected recommendations that speak to the roles and duties of government institutions, civil society, religious and traditional leaders, communities, and external partners.

For the government of Ethiopia, it is required to create forums for genuine, inclusive conversation not only at the national forum, but also in places like East Gojjam, where voices have been silenced for years. These conversations must go beyond rhetoric and begin to tackle structural injustices like constitutional clauses that fuel ethnic discord and fight over identity and space. Rebuilding trust between citizens and their neighbor regions also means confirming the rule of law. Citizens must be assured that their grievances will be listened to and their rights protected not just in towns, but in every kebele where the culture of fear has become a norm. Alongside political and legal reforms, the government must also invest in the human security fundamentals: schools, clinics, roads, and local institutions which can give confidence to a future of peace. Such investments send a forceful signal: that every citizen matters.

Civil Society Organizations working in the region should increase their involvement to meet the challenge. Their activities must go far beyond urban workshops. They must reach out to rural areas programs of response to lived realities/1 from trauma healing to youth vocational training, from civic to peace community

forums. CSOs must play a unique role to bridge communities to one another, to broaden marginalized voices, and to form partnerships that transcend the political divide. But for this to happen, they must be supported financially, technically, and politically and they must be protected from suspicion and backlash.

Religious and traditional leaders also have a responsibility to play. Many leaders continue to possess moral authority among their own people, even if their authority has been challenged. The leaders and influencers need to reassert neutrality and promote peace, creating sacred and safe spaces where polarized communities can begin to talk together again. Their ability to unite people and mediate is not symbolic it is real and desperately needed.

At the community level, the recommendations are perhaps the most compelling. Citizens must be motivated to rebuild peace groups, revive mutual help associations, and build their intergenerational spaces where youth, elders and women can sit together and map out their future. It might feel more like small steps, but it is where sustainable peace begins not in Addis or in global conferences, but in ordinary-day relations of friends and neighbors.

Finally, international partners have a responsibility to move from crisis response and into sustained, relational peace building. They can help mobilize dialogue, support local movements, and hold open space for truth-telling and justice. Their engagement should be strategic, inclusive, and grounded in respect for local leadership.

Together, these recommendations form a holistic vision: one in which peace is not foisted upon people but built painstakingly, from below.

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Annex

Consent Form

Title of the Study: *Exploring Peace and Security Dynamics in the East Gojjam Zone: Challenges and Opportunities for Community Development*

Researcher: Yohannes Girma Abera

Institution: Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work

Contact Information: Phone: +251913534018

Email: johngirma53@gmail.com

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to explore the dynamics of peace and security in the East Gojjam Zone of the Amhara Regional State. This study aims to understand the challenges, opportunities, and roles of different stakeholders in promoting sustainable peace and community development.

Before you decide whether to participate, please carefully read the following information. This form explains the purpose of the study, your rights as a participant, and how the information will be used.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigates how the community views relief and security, pinpoints obstacles, and assesses the office that authorities officials, senior, religious leaders, polite mellow society governing body, and biotic community members encounter in promoting peace. The firmness of purpose will serve to create neighborhood-based solutions for long-term peace building in the area.

Voluntary Participation

You are under no obligation to participate in this subject. There won't be any recoil if you decide to avoid answering any questions or the result of the report at any point without giving a reason.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All information you provide will remain strictly confidential and will be used only for academic and research purposes. No identifying details, such as your name, address, or personal information, will be recorded or disclosed. The results will be presented in a way that ensures complete anonymity.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, discussing topics related to peace and security may bring up personal or emotional experiences. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, you may skip any question or withdraw from the study.

By participating, you will have an opportunity to share your experiences and insights, which may contribute to shaping community-based peace building initiatives and informing policymakers.

Duration of Participation

The interview or discussion is expected to take approximately 30–45 minutes, depending on the depth of responses.

Consent Statement

By signing below, you confirm that you have read and understood the purpose and procedures of this study. You voluntarily agree to participate and understand that you may withdraw at any time.

Participant's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name: Yohannes Girma

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Introduction for the Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

Greetings!

My name is Yohannes Girma, and I am a Master's student at Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work. As part of my MSc degree, I am conducting this research to explore the peace and security dynamics in the East Gojjam Zone of the Amhara Regional State. The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges, opportunities, and roles of different stakeholders in promoting sustainable peace and community development.

Your participation is highly valuable as it will help me gather rich and meaningful insights into community perspectives on peace and security. The information you provide will contribute to identifying practical solutions to enhance peace building efforts in the region.

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time or choose not to answer specific questions without any consequences. The information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes. No identifying details, such as your name or personal information, will be recorded or disclosed in any form.

This study is designed to respect your perspectives and experiences while ensuring that your responses contribute meaningfully to understanding peace and security in the East Gojjam Zone. Every effort will be made to maintain your privacy and anonymity throughout the research process. Should you have any concerns or require further clarification, please feel free to ask before proceeding.

Your insights are highly valuable, and I sincerely appreciate your time and willingness to participate in this study. This questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. I kindly ask for your honest opinions and experiences.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me before proceeding. Thank you for your time and contribution!

Researcher: Yohannes Girma Abera

Institution: Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work

Contact Information: Phone: +251913534018

Email: johngirma53@gmail.com

Section 1: Background Information

- How long have you lived in East Gojjam Zone?
- What is your primary role in the community (e.g., community leader, elder, religious leader, government official, civil society representative, etc.)?
- In your view, how has peace and security in this area changed over the years?

Section 2: Perceptions of Peace and Security

- How would you describe the current state of peace and security in your community?
- What do you think are the major causes of conflict and insecurity in this region?
- How do conflicts typically start and escalate in your community?
- How do you and other community members experience the impacts of conflicts?

Section 3: Role of Stakeholders in Peace building

- What role do elders, religious leaders, and cultural gatekeepers play in maintaining peace?
- How effective do you think traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are in resolving conflicts?

- What actions has the government taken to improve peace and security in East Gojjam?
- How well do civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) contribute to peace and security?
- Are there any partnerships between government, local leaders, and organizations to address peace and security issues? If so, how effective are they?

Section 4: Challenges and Barriers to Peace building

- What are the biggest challenges preventing sustainable peace in this region?
- Do you think ethnic, political, or economic factors contribute most to conflicts? Why?
- How do youth and women participate in peace building efforts? What challenges do they face?
- What legal or policy-related issues make it difficult to resolve conflicts effectively?

Section 5: Opportunities for Peace and Community Development

- What solutions or strategies do you think could help improve peace and security in your community?
- How can economic development, job creation, and better governance contribute to peace building efforts?
- What can be done to strengthen community-led peace building initiatives in East Gojjam?
- If you could recommend one urgent action to improve peace and security, what would it be?

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

1. Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Facilitator's Script:

Good [morning/afternoon], and thank you for joining this discussion. My name is Yohannes

Girma, and I am conducting this study as part of my Master's research at Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work. The purpose of this discussion is to explore community perspectives on peace and security dynamics in the East Gojjam Zone, identify key challenges, and understand opportunities for sustainable peace building.

This is a safe space for open discussion, and there are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to share your thoughts and experiences. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous, and everything discussed will remain confidential.

If at any point you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer a question or leave the discussion. The session will last approximately 60–90 minutes.

Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

2. Warm-Up Questions (10 minutes)

- Could you introduce yourself and briefly describe your role in the community?
- What does peace and security mean to you in the context of East Gojjam?
- How would you describe the current peace and security situation in your area?

3. Major Challenges of Peace and Security (20-30 minutes)

- What are the main sources of conflict or insecurity in this region? (e.g., ethnic tensions, political issues, resource disputes, crime, etc.)
- How do conflicts usually start, and how do they escalate within the community?
- What are the most significant impacts of conflict and insecurity on individuals, families, and the community as a whole?
- Have there been any recent incidents that affected peace and security? How were they handled?
- In your opinion, who is most affected by conflicts in this area? (e.g., youth, women, elders, farmers, traders, etc.)

4. Role of Stakeholders in Peace building (20-30 minutes)

- What role do elders, religious leaders, and cultural gatekeepers play in conflict resolution?
- How effective are traditional methods of conflict resolution in maintaining peace?
- What efforts have been made by the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote peace and security?
- Do you think there is effective collaboration between community members, local leaders, and government officials in peacebuilding efforts? Why or why not?
- What role do women and youth play in maintaining or disrupting peace? How can their involvement in peace efforts be strengthened?

5. Opportunities for Peace building and Development (20 minutes)

- What are some existing strengths or traditional practices that help maintain peace in East Gojjam?
- In what ways can economic development, job creation, and governance reforms contribute to peacebuilding?
- What specific strategies or initiatives do you think would be most effective in preventing conflicts and strengthening peace?
- What role should external organizations (e.g., NGOs, donors, government institutions) play in supporting community peace efforts?
- If you could recommend one urgent action to improve peace and security in your community, what would it be?

6. Conclusion (10 minutes)

- Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't discussed?

- What message would you like to send to policymakers, local leaders, and development organizations about peace and security in East Gojjam?