Local Reconciliation in Libya since 2011: Actors, Processes, and Mechanisms

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Local reconciliation is among the most important aspects underlying settlement and conflict resolution processes within communities, and usually adopts a traditional form through traditional actors such as traditional leaders, tribal elders, tribe members, notables or wise men. The mechanisms adopted by these reconciliation processes depend largely upon local customs, and whether or not they are socially accepted as an alternative to adjudicating disputed matters. Customs derive their strength from their inherited social appreciation, meaning and respect, in addition to their moral authority, which strongly influences the parties in conflict to not resort to violence again after they accepted the result of the customary reconciliation process.

Considering that local reconciliation mechanisms are one of the long-term basis for national reconciliation, this study will analyze their functioning, identify their actors and their main stakeholders, especially tribal leaders and their role in these processes. The study will also evaluate these local reconciliation mechanisms and the different agreements reached since 2011, looking into their success and failures in securing peace, while identifying the challenges that often hindered their full implementation on the ground. To do so, the study relies on a content analysis tool through which all available agreements concluded after 2011 were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, as well as through in-depth interviews with key respondents (including tribal leaders, members of local reconciliation committees, experts and civil society activists).