

# THE GENEVA PEACEBUILDING PLATFORM

## 2010 FORUM

### **Innovating to Build a Lasting Peace:**

### **Is “Interim Stabilisation” a Promising Approach to Effective Peacebuilding?**

4 November 2010

Location: Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Auditorium Sergio Vieira di Mello

Conflicts do not end with the signing of a peace agreement. Political, military and societal actors in post-war context need to undergo a process of gradual adjustment to be able to embark on long-term national reconciliation and reconstruction. Yet, in many post-conflict countries, national actors are encouraged to undertake ambitious peacebuilding and state-building programmes aiming at transforming radically domestic institutions and political practices in a very short timeframe, and in a period where most of the pre-conditions necessary to the successful implementations of reforms are not ripe.

The discrepancy between international strategies and local dynamics is a critical challenge to peace processes. Traditional security promotion activities, such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), or Security Sector Reform (SSR), constitute possibly the area where this mismatch is most salient. Although these interventions lie at the heart of the politics of peace, as they aim to recalibrate power relations and monopoly over the means of coercion, they all too often continue to be designed as purely technical activities without much attention being paid to local contextual factors and political dynamics.

However, security promotion activities, like any peacebuilding and early recovery programmes, are likely to do more harm than good if their design does not include space for continued dialogue over contending political agendas and pressing demands, for confidence-building among affected communities, and for the preparation of combatants to a new political situation where power is to be sought and acquired through other means than military ones.

In recent years, peace mediators and practitioners have crafted a range of innovative and experimental activities to address the tensions and dilemmas that the implementation of ambitious security promotion programmes do not fail to generate on the ground. These innovations, known as interim stabilisation measures or “second generation” DDR are designed to create space for dialogue and buy time for an environment conducive to social and economic reintegration to emerge. They accompany conventional security promotion and form part of a broader transitional integration process that seeks to balance adequate security with necessary development. Community-owned, and explicitly derived from local cultural norms, these activities seek to create and sustain “holding patterns” to prepare institutions, communities and combatants for long-term peacebuilding and reintegration efforts.

These emerging practices need to be better documented, and discussed in order to assess their actual effectiveness, refine our understanding of their mechanism, broaden the range of interim stabilisation approaches, and identify and address their limitations. The Platform’s 2010 forum will provide a useful space in Geneva to discuss these practical and conceptual innovations. The Forum will gather international experts and relevant practitioners from the humanitarian, development, security and peacebuilding communities for a one-day exchange of experiences and opinions on the relevance and effectiveness of the “interim stabilisation” approach. The content of the discussions will be captured and published as Geneva Peacebuilding Paper.

## Key questions:

1. What are the conceptual underpinnings of interim stabilization? How did interim stabilization approaches develop concretely?
2. What is the added-value of these approaches? To what extent do they contribute to wider peacebuilding and statebuilding dynamics?
3. What does the concept of interim stabilization add to existing post-conflict recovery programmes? How do interim stabilization initiatives effect and interact with humanitarian action?
4. To what extent does interim stabilization align with wider multilateral peacebuilding initiatives? What are the implications of interim stabilization in terms of governance and state-building? In the field of peacekeeping? In the field of conflict prevention?
5. What are the implications of the informal and hybrid nature of interim stabilisation activities for the design of international peacebuilding strategies? What does it mean in terms of programming and financing? What are the outcomes of these practices? How do they relate to wider multilateral efforts?
6. What are the intended and unintended consequences of interim stabilization approaches? What are the disputed issues around interim stabilization?

## Expected Outcomes

The primary outcome of the forum will be to raise awareness on as well as provide a critical evaluation of emerging practices and means to end cycles of violence. This meeting will encourage the consolidation of practical experiences which can provide support to facilitators and stakeholders of peace processes who face the challenge of weighing critical contextual aspects, tackling multiple risk factors, and tailoring their efforts to best fit conditions on the ground.

The Forum will also create momentum for further, more specific work on the added advantage of adopting interim stabilisation measures and second generation DDR in conflict settings. As a concrete output, the content and conclusions of the forum will be captured and published in a Geneva Peacebuilding Paper.

## Background reading

Sultan Barakat, Seán Deely, Steven A. Zyck, "A tradition of forgetting': stabilisation and humanitarian action in historical perspective", *Disasters*, 2010, 34(S3): 297–319, October 2010.

Nat J. Colletta; Robert Muggah, "Context matters: interim stabilisation and second generation approaches to security promotion", *Conflict, Security & Development*, Volume 9(4), December 2009, pages 425–453, url: [http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/684014\\_731228343\\_917906947.pdf](http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/684014_731228343_917906947.pdf)

Sarah Collinson, Samir Elhawary, and Robert Muggah, "States of fragility: stabilisation and its implications for humanitarian action", *Disasters*, 2010, 34(S3): 275–296, Oct. 2010

*Interim Stabilization. Balancing Security and Development in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Nat J. Colletta, Jens Samuelsson Schjørlie & Hannes Berts, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2008, url: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/43/56/381066a4.pdf>

*Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Practices in Peace Operations*, UN DPKO, New York, January 2010, url: [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/ddr/ddr\\_062010.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/ddr/ddr_062010.pdf)

*OECD-DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform (SSR): Supporting Security and Justice*, OECD 2007, Paris, url: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/25/38406485.pdf>

*Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)*, UN. 2006  
<http://unddr.org/iddrs/>

"Innovations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policy and research. Reflections on the last decade", *NUPI Working Paper 774*, 2010,  
[www.nupi.no/content/download/13642/128878/.../WP-774-Muggah.pdf](http://www.nupi.no/content/download/13642/128878/.../WP-774-Muggah.pdf)