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West Africa
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou

Introduction

The contemporary West Africa security landscape is rapidly transforming. Over the past decade, chronic political instability, persistent societal volatility and continuous armed conflict have dominated the regional scene. These developments raise important questions for the nature and practice of peacebuilding in the coming phase. The trajectory of the West African state stands squarely at the heart of this recurring course of insecurity. The current context is one of deterioration (of conditions), density (of actors) and complexity (of vectors). A crowded, increasingly interwoven – and at times almost unreadable – space of violence-filled competition around the feeble and entfeebled West African state is the primary challenge of peacebuilding in the region.

By all accounts, the area is currently experiencing what can objectively be described as a degraded security context. Neither proactively nor reactively have regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), been able to effectively address the crises (Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau and Mali) that developed over the past few years. Whereas, economically, signs of some overall improvement can be identified in the zone (notably higher average growth rates since the mid-to-late 2000s), the rapidity of the security degradation in the region is arresting. No tangible, post-colonial progress towards stability has arguably materialised and, in 2011-2013, political systems once thought to be transitioning more or less democratically since the early 1990s – Mali and Senegal are prime examples – came to suddenly experience grave nation-wide crises, revealing a profound fragility. In the case of Mali, such abruptly-revealed conditions led in quick succession to a coup, the de facto partition of the country and an international armed intervention with regional implications.

If societal violence and state fragility are at the heart of these processes, the difficulty in securing lasting peace in West Africa is also due to the fact that the challenges do not (or no longer) solely limit themselves to pressing
peacebuilding dimensions (i.e., the avoidance of an immediate relapse into strife and conflict). Yet, it emerges at this juncture that part of the problem is that ‘the focus has been on what can be measured.’

As we forge ahead in the second decade of the twenty-first century, we must come to terms with the fact that the normative underpinnings of the classical peacebuilding approach (post-conflict, reconciliation, assistance) have been tested in West Africa and found to be wanting.

As it is, a widened, cross-cutting and multidimensional nature of peacebuilding is now vividly illustrated in the West African environment. (The drivers of insecurity in the region are indeed themselves often addressed in the context of other regions, notably the Sahel, North Africa and Central Africa.) As we go beyond the aftermath-of-conflict dimension towards that which then is measured with great(er) difficulty, the contemporary situations in West Africa therefore highlight the need to:

- Understand security threats that play out continuously and fluidly beyond the moment of conflict;
- Conceptualise peacebuilding against the context of sequences of transition; and
- Anchor that understanding and conceptualisation in a project aimed at lasting and locally owned statebuilding.

Challenges to building peace in West Africa

The primary challenge to building peace in West Africa concerns the important threat that transnational non-state armed groups have come to represent in the whole of the region. Over the past decade – steadily, quantitatively and qualitatively – transnational groups have risen to the level of a multifaceted menace that has both contributed to the deepening of existing conflicts and spawned new ones. Whereas most 1960s post-independence conflicts had been intra-state and the 1970s and 1980s rebellions were characterised by minimal and temporary spill-over effects, starting in the 1990s and accelerating throughout the 2000s, the region has witnessed the materialisation of a new type of group whose ethos and modus operandi by nature transcend borders.

Such newfound projection of insecurity stands today at the heart of any peacebuilding process. It does so because, on the one hand, the groups have acquired experience and muscularity, and, on the other, the tepidity and corruption of state responses has emboldened the groups’ leaderships to now plan and threaten on a wider regional scale than previously. Consequently, operational opportunities are today unparalleled for the armed groups.

Combined with the materialisation of insecurity corridors and ‘ungoverned spaces’, such augmented chances for action by the groups have also led to a complex scene whereby the groups are characterised by their transnational nature as well as by the hybridity of functions they display. As a new grammar-in-the-making featuring atomisation and acceleration, evanescence and fluidity, is playing out, the groups are also increasingly belonging

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1 I owe this notion to a remark by the former United Nations Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno during a discussion at a meeting in Bellagio, Italy in April 2014.
simultaneously to different categories: drug traffickers, criminals, terrorists, militias and insurgents – all while displaying elusiveness in their ‘war’ aims.

Prospects of peace in West Africa are therefore impacted importantly by the large number of powerful armed groups active in the region. These include, notably, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), formerly the Algeria-based Salafist Group for Predication and Combat (GSPC) (throughout the region), Ansar al Din (Mali), the Mouvement pour l’Unicité et le Jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest (MUJAO) (in and around Mali), Al Murabitun (throughout the region), the Mouvement National pour la Libération de l’Azawad (MNLA) (Mali), Boko Haram (Nigeria), Ansaru (Nigeria/Cameroon), the Young Patriots (Ivory Coast), the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (Senegal), the Africa Marine Commando (Cameroon) and the Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice (Niger).

Cross-border rebel movements (e.g., from Mali into Burkina Faso, from Nigeria into Cameroon and, beyond, from Chad into the Central African Republic) combined with a so-called rising ‘nexus’ between criminality and terrorism (a phenomenon whose entangled manifestations have yet to be fully unpacked in policy terms) also end up erasing the particular genealogy of specific groups. In addition, these morph continuously from domestic organisations into regional franchises, increasingly acquiring lethality at the level of the continent. Moreover, such violence is increasingly about market control. These issues play out globally (Mexico, Asia, Niger Delta, Iraq and soon enough in Syria), but they are vividly illustrated in West Africa.

In the wide, open spaces of the region, basic exchanges (commercial, matrimonial, political and religious) between distant localities are dependent on the viability and continuity of social links. The very transport of goods relies on the presence of such social fabric. Today, the multiplying presence of outlaw groups in such a fragile environment generates insecurity but also hampers development as the destabilising patterns of the groups have set in motion illicit ways of exchange, which spell first and foremost fragility of both state and community.

How, then, can peace be built in such a deteriorating scene, one whose degeneration does not necessarily have a centre of gravity? In particular, the impact of drugs, the effect of which is profoundly corrupting politics (in Guinea-Bissau notably), is today more than ever hampering the proper functioning of security services and is further escalating armed violence. Amidst overburdened judicial systems, this, in turn, has an overall destabilising effect on society, state and region, whose full sequence is still unknown.

The second key challenge for building peace in West Africa concerns the destabilising nature of the crisis in Mali. Itself the result in many ways of the intervention in Libya, the situation in Mali has deeply impacted the security equilibrium and the peacebuilding prospects in West Africa. The consequential fact that a major country in the region experienced occupation of its northern half by armed groups from March 2012 to January 2013, that its democratisation process (haphazardly embarked on in 1992) was brought to a halt and that a large-scale international intervention took place has cumulatively impacted the fabric of the region’s outlook on peace.

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The interrelatedness of the causalities that led to the Mali crisis (Libyan conflict overflow, Algerian terrorists’ invasion, Tuareg insurgency, state officials’ corruption, traffickers’ control, military rebellion, northern irredentism) and its scale (involvement of the United Nations (UN), the African Union and ECOWAS) have, in the wake of Operation Serval led by the French, left a soft belly whose consequences on the whole of the West African region cannot be underestimated. Most problematically, the Malian scene and by extension the whole of West Africa has now witnessed the militarisation of peacebuilding. Moreover, this is strongly impacted by the circulation and diversion of weapons. A 1990s-style large-scale transfer of weapons, in the context, for instance, of the conflicts in Sierra Leone (1991-2002) and in Liberia (1989-2006) has given way to a rapid and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms throughout the region.

Finally, a third challenge to building peace in the region is the weakness of the state. A most problematic process of de-statization has been underway in the region undermining both the viability and continuity of processes aimed at long-term transformative efforts encompassing peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Wherever one turns, states in the region are arguably weaker than ever. The imperfect and loaded structure inherited from the colonial era has dissipated, wasting whatever chances it had of offering a minimal base for the architecture of modern states. In lieu, have emerged weak states whose fabric remains endemically fragile and prone to collapse in the face of any waves of protest.

The question of the state and its geographical deployment, its functioning, representativity, or lack thereof, and regulatory role are at the centre of the problem. An architecture of skewed and nepotistic redistribution mechanisms and the inability of the state to provide security for its citizens account, additionally, for the accumulation of unresolved crises.

The succession of leaders long in place (e.g., Felix Houphouët Boigny in Ivory Coast) has also opened the door to an extended period of political instability (underwritten by violent competition), which can easily spin out of control into larger threats to peace. From the electoral crisis in Ivory Coast in 2011, which led to an armed international intervention to the post-election riots in Senegal in January 2012, the connection is increasingly made between societal tensions and armed conflict, and the reason is primarily the presence of an empty vessel state. Fundamentally, this situation is the result of a deterioration of capacity. In the event, there is a deficit in the conceptualisation, organisation and practice of statehood in West Africa and this stands in the way of viable and lasting peacebuilding.

**Opportunities for building peace in West Africa**

In the next phase, the permanent factors of play will be a period of transition and a renewed preoccupation with statebuilding. Quintessentially, West Africa is in the midst of a period of intense transformation and these two elements are arguably constitutive of important opportunities to build peace in the region.

Defined as periods of change, transitions are both founding and formative moments. As such, they set a society on a path that shapes its subsequent political development. Today in West Africa, specific nations are transitioning from former regimes to new ones. This evolution varies, with formal (Mali, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau) and less formal (Senegal, Nigeria) transitions, and is constitutive of a moment of transition impacting the political atmosphere of the whole of the
region (Burkina Faso, for instance, seems static but a closer look reveals dynamics of impending change, as attested to by riots and an attempted coup in 2011).

Specifically, the transitions in West Africa mean going beyond elections; redefining the role and place of the military; moving towards republican consent, devising constitution-making and power-sharing; pursuing institution-building; engineering economic development and societal empowerment; and enabling citizen participation. In sum, going beyond the election moment and towards an integrated operational framework for political transition featuring a set of operational tools and options, is a project that can constitute an opportunity to update the peacebuilding lens in the region. This is all the more important as the noted constant deterioration in the fabric of West African societies weakens the social capital of trust needed during transitional periods and facilitates the danger of relapse into a despotic demand.

Similarly, the current projects – indeed resulting precisely from the transitions – aimed at rebuilding states represent an additional opportunity to embed the peacebuilding logic into these newly (re)built states. Centrifugal logics accommodating and neutralising extremists are the interface between peacebuilding and statebuilding. Peacebuilding must be situated at a different level than as it was understood in the previous phase. How to go beyond militarised responses and how to generate domestically produced statebuilding? How to weave all of this in a statebuilding project built on legitimacy and stability? Such rebooting must also necessarily eschew the fatalist culturalist perspectives limited to ‘endemic conflict in the South’.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

The fast-transforming West African security landscape translates primarily into a change from an earlier emphasis on development to a vastly militarised scene. Lawlessness is the new threat in the region. Thus, to build peace in West Africa, transitions must be steered efficiently and their aim should be a viable and lasting, domestically-produced statebuilding.

As the region transitions and launches anew comprehensive statebuilding projects, there is undeniably much room for support from external actors. Both specific international partners beyond the region and the United Nations can play a key role in this process. The architecture of such support is already in place. If, as argued, one of the main threats to the region’s peace is the post-conflict scene in places such as Mali and Ivory Coast, then major UN-led international operations (the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)) are already on the ground and liaising actively with local and regional actors.

What must be understood, however, is that current engagement faces expectations of a changed approach, away from paternalism and control. If, helpfully, in headquarters there are increasingly calls for “doing different things” and for “doing things differently” in fragile states, locally and regionally those aspects are regarded as necessary for viable engagement. Specifically, as fragility propels violence, it is ownership and assertiveness constitutive of political commitment and capacity that are needed and in need of bolstering by accompanying

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partners. To be certain, there is an argument to be made that ‘locals’ remain to a large extent an underexploited peacebuilding resource.\(^7\)

In light of the prevailing situation in West Africa, the necessary support to build peace in the region means therefore delving deeper into the fact that the slate is not blank and that peacebuilding has developed in the context of sequence of transitions in the 1990s-2010s period and that during this same timeframe, West Africa has undergone key transformations. Rethinking that linkage means pursuing environmental stability through a de-politicised aggregation of capacity, cohesiveness and consistence.

East Africa

Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Jok Madut Jok, Ken Menkhaus and Nuur Mohamud Sheekh

Introduction

Much of East Africa, especially the Greater Horn of Africa, has been the site of some of the most intractable armed conflicts in Africa, and continues to be the scene of some of the greatest frustrations and setbacks for international peacebuilding efforts. This stands in contrast to more positive recent trends in peacebuilding in other parts of Africa. At the time of writing, the hard-won peace in South Sudan has disintegrated into armed violence that has led to 800,000 internally displaced persons, 250,000 new refugees and the possibility of a major famine. Sudan is beset by armed rebellions in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Somalia remains a failed state and is wracked by political violence, communal clashes and an urban guerrilla war waged by the jihadi group al-Shabaab. Kenya is struggling to cope with al-Shabaab terrorist attacks, has mounted an ill-advised security campaign against its large Somali population and remains beset by deep ethnic and sectarian tensions. The two most peaceful countries in the region – Ethiopia and Eritrea – are led by some of the most authoritarian governments in Africa and maintain a ‘negative peace’ imposed by fear and repression. Their contested border remains one of the most militarised pieces of real estate in Africa, a legacy of the bloody, unresolved war they fought in 1998-2000. This sobering current situation forms part of a much longer tapestry of armed conflict across the majority of the region.

Over the past three decades, East Africa’s crises of war, political violence and violent extremism have commanded global attention on a major scale. But regional and international responses have only occasionally produced desired solutions and, in some instances, have made things worse. The region’s persistent armed conflicts have resulted in the greatest concentration of peacekeeping forces in the world. At present, 74,000 uniformed personnel serve in the five United Nations (UN) or African Union (AU) peace operations from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to Sudan to Somalia. The region has also been the target of a series of high-level diplomatic missions and interventions designed to broker peace or, in the case of Kenya’s post-election violence in 2008, prevent political violence from spiralling into civil war. Post-
war transitional governments across the region have been the object of extensive statebuilding and peacebuilding assistance as well. International efforts to enforce greater accountability in East Africa have resulted in UN arms embargoes, robust monitoring of and sanctions against violators of arms embargoes, and indictments by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against two sitting heads of state in the region.

Challenges to building peace in East Africa

East Africa’s crises are diverse, making region-wide generalisation difficult. Still, some challenges to peacebuilding appear in most or all of the countries of the region. They include the following:

**History of civil war.** The literature on civil war consistently concludes that one of the top predictors of a civil war is a recent previous civil war. Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia/Eritrea have all been through civil wars in the past, which have produced deep social divisions and grievances that have increased their vulnerability to backsliding into renewed war. Kenya’s post-electoral violence did not reach a state of civil war but generated levels of displacement and ethnic polarisation that are arguably comparable to legacies of civil war.

**Ethnic cleansing.** Many of East Africa’s armed crises – full-scale civil wars, the many communal clashes that have been exacerbated by or have spun off of civil wars and political violence that stopped short of war – have involved some type of large-scale displacement off the land (the fate of the losing side) and land-grabbing (by the winners). Darfur is the most egregious example of ethnic cleansing as a principal driver of the war. Somalia’s civil war in 1991-92 resulted in massive ethnic cleansing and the occupation of urban and rural real estate by stronger clans that remains a major impediment to peace. Many communal clashes have resulted in groups being intentionally displaced from ancestral land. Loss of land is the source of deep-seated grievances that render groups more inclined to take up arms.

**Land.** Land disputes – over access, titling and rights – are central to the story of armed conflicts across the region. The violence in Kenya in 2008 was triggered by election results, but driven by long-standing communal tensions over land dating back to the colonial era and produced displacement from land that is not resolved. Across the region, disputes over land ownership and access are ubiquitous, dangerous and diverse, including communal fights over disputed land and water, individual clashes over land titles in peri-urban spaces, land-grabbing of valuable property by corrupt officials and enormous land leasing deals by governments that displace hundreds of thousands of small-scale farmers and pastoralists. Land scarcity is worsened by rapid population growth. Anxiety over land is heightened by weak and unreliable government land titling systems, and that anxiety is easily exploited by violence entrepreneurs.

**Government complicity in war and political violence.** Across the region, state authorities whose principal obligation is to protect their citizens have instead been complicit in violence against them. When governments purposefully orchestrate political violence against sections of their own population as a form of collective punishment or to advance parochial political agendas, they erode their own legitimacy and drive communities to support insurgencies. This dynamic also robs international peacebuilders of viable government partners with whom to work.

**Weak Government.** With the exceptions of Ethiopia and Eritrea, most of the governments in East Africa and the Horn are weak, and, in varying degrees, lack the capacity to extend authority
into remote border areas. As a result, even when governments are well-intentioned, they cannot control armed violence in parts of the countryside. One common government tactic to address this has been reliance on paramilitaries, often deputised as ‘local protection forces’. This has led to serious abuses as para-militaries pursue tribal or clan agendas at the expense of rivals. Government weakness has also manifested itself in an ability to exercise command and control over its national security forces, some of which are organised along communal lines. For instance, clan-based brigades in Somalia are a major source of insecurity for populations in areas recovered from the jihadi group al-Shabaab, and tribally based military units in South Sudan have clashed with one another in the recent violence there.

**Bad governance.** Politics across most of the region – whether authoritarian, democratic or sectarian – has only rarely reflected a social contract and a respect for constitutional processes that allow citizens to pursue their interest and justice through normal political and legal channels. High levels of corruption, patronage and/or repression have meant that citizens and groups out of power see little hope in turning to the government to voice grievances. This increases the likelihood of groups resorting to armed insurgency.

**Accountability-free zones and transitional justice.** Regional heads of state have not only failed to pressure one another to honour their ‘responsibility to protect’ their own citizens, but have instead devoted considerable political energy to combatting any attempts to hold leaders accountable for crimes against humanity. Regional heads of state agree on few things, but they have been one voice in condemning the ICC. In consequence, a culture of impunity pervades the region. The only post-war justice that has been applied has been against defeated parties – in Rwanda post-1994 and Ethiopia post-1991.

**Proxy wars.** East Africa’s wars and communal violence have often been fuelled and manipulated by external actors, mainly from within the region itself. Regional governments have professed commitment to collective peacebuilding via the regional organisation, the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), but in practice have backed armed insurgents against one another.

**Violence entrepreneurs.** The protracted nature of armed conflict in the region has given rise to a range of different actors whose political or economic interests are best served by perpetuating some degree of political violence, communal polarisation, extremism or lawlessness. These violence entrepreneurs include warlords, political figures and business people at the commanding heights of the war economy, down to local militia commanders and criminal gangs eking out a livelihood from looting, cattle rustling or extortion. Violence entrepreneurs include political figures who are skilled at exploiting and enflaming ethnic tensions for parochial gain.

**Spoilers.** While some spoilers are ‘total spoilers’ – warlords, jihadis and others who have no interest in any peace – most regional spoilers are situational; that is, they block accords and undermine peace because they perceive the particular details of the peace as working against them or failing to include them. The fragility of post-conflict settings in the region gives spoilers easy ability to unravel peace accords they find threatening.

**Small arms proliferation.** The ubiquity of small arms across the region has made communal clashes much more lethal and has rendered the entire region more vulnerable to armed clashes.
Statebuilding and transitional governments. Post-war efforts to establish transitional governments, write new constitutions and revive state capacity in East Africa have been conflict-producing exercises, as they ultimately determine the question over which protagonists fought on the battlefield: who rules? Statebuilding efforts by the international community have not always been adequately attuned to the fact that building the capacity of the state creates winners and losers in a context of low trust and government legitimacy.

Political devolution. Political decentralisation initiatives across parts of East Africa have been meant to improve democratic voice, local ownership and government accountability. But they have also created political tensions and armed clashes over county or federal state borders, and have frequently been understood locally to serve as zones of exclusive or hegemonic ethnic rights, exacerbating communal tensions and even leading to localised ethnic cleansing.

Economic factors. Economic conditions associated with vulnerability to armed conflict are present across the region: high rates of poverty, growing income inequality and high dependence on primary products exports. Oil extraction has expanded national budgets in some East Africa states but, as in many other zones where extractive industries develop in a context of weak and corrupt government, the rentier state that results is the focus of even more intense political struggles.

Social pressures. East Africa is facing a number of powerful social trends that increase susceptibility to instability or armed conflict, including rapid population growth and a youth bulge; rural distress; rapid urbanisation; and rising religious intolerance and extremism.

Interventions. External armed interventions in the region’s crises (UN, AU and unilateral) have had mixed results and at times have exacerbated the conflicts they meant to quell. Regional states have been exceptionally active in intervening militarily in other states’ armed conflicts.

Violent extremism. Violent extremist ideologies in East Africa include ethnic and tribal chauvinism expressed in hate media. The radical jihadi group al-Shabaab is by far the most dangerous and destabilising example of violent extremism in East Africa and has spread from Somalia into Kenya, Tanzania and other regional states. It recruits from marginalised Muslim populations and from the desperate underclass of slum-dwellers and refugees in the region.

Opportunities for building peace in East Africa

Despite this gloomy inventory of challenges, windows of opportunity do exist in the region. Many factors that could promote peacebuilding can also be a force for armed conflict – much depends on local context. Our survey of countries in East Africa identified several worth highlighting.

Growing elite consensus on the need for new governance. In Sudan, political elites are collectively acknowledging that the current governing system there is broken. This is resulting in efforts across the political spectrum to promote the idea of a national dialogue to end the decades of dominance by a core group in and around Khartoum at the expenses of the country’s many marginalised groups in the periphery. In some other troubled East African states, this same discussion among elites – mainly in civil society and the diaspora – is occurring as well.
and offers the prospect of a rising peace constituency. Kenya’s ability to step back from the brink of civil war in 2008 was widely attributed to the determined efforts of its vibrant civil society.

**Resilient social contracts.** Many areas of the region have remained peaceful despite the presence of powerful conflict drivers. Somaliland, for instance, has maintained peaceful, stable conditions for a generation. The resilience of communities to conflict drivers can be attributed to many factors – one of the most important of which is the strong social contracts governing relations between ethnic groups, and between local governments and society. These social contracts limiting recourse to political violence are maintained by diverse sources, including business interests, religious communities and customary authorities.

**Transformational economic possibilities.** Across East Africa, new discoveries of hydrocarbons offer the possibility of dramatic new levels of revenues. Ambitious infrastructure projects offer potential for region-wide transport networks and energy grids. Foreign investment is also showing growing interest in the region. The possibilities for transformational new levels of economic growth and investment could have clarifying effects on political calculations in the region. Whether this possible windfall of new investment and revenue occurs and whether it has a positive or negative impact on peacebuilding in the region will depend on the commitment of regional leaders to promote peace and good governance. Visions of rapid development have the potential to change political behaviour in ways that could consolidate peace.

**War weariness.** Parts of East Africa that have been most affected by armed conflict have seen a drop in public support for political violence. The most vivid example of this is in Somalia, where al-Shabaab once enjoyed strong public support, but today has lost most of that support as the public has turned against its gratuitous use of violence and its extremism. The group is still a serious threat in the region, but without public support it will face mounting operational problems.

**IGAD.** For all of its flaws – the deep internal division of member-states and the perception that it is dominated by Ethiopia – the existence of a regional organisation dedicated to the promotion of conflict prevention, such as IGAD, is an asset.

**Required support for peacebuilding and the role of the UN**

Regional governments and populations in East Africa and the Horn are on the whole suspicious of external peacebuilding efforts, partly because so few have borne fruit over the years and partly because the international community – including the UN – has been fiercely criticised by almost every government in the region for ‘meddling’ in the sovereign affairs of the state. There is, in short, less goodwill to work with than in the past. Nonetheless, external support to and pressure for peacebuilding remains indispensable.

Our survey of east African countries identifies several especially critical roles:

**Continued support for local-level peacebuilding.** Careful, well-informed and timely support to local actors engaged in peacebuilding at the grassroots level has worked and continues to benefit from external assistance.

**Promotion of inclusive national dialogue.** One of the recurring shortfalls of peace accords in the region has been inadequate representation – talks have too often involved a narrow range of
leaders, leaving many third parties feeling left out and inclined to serve as spoilers. External support for national dialogue is critical to provide essential political space for political leaders and opinion shapers to explore avenues for compromise, to build trust and to forge working coalitions across conflict lines. Ensuring these dialogues are adequately inclusive is an important task for outside mediators. In East Africa’s multi-sectarian states, routinised inter-religious dialogue is of special importance.

**Promotion of good governance.** Poor governance is at the heart of much of the conflict in East Africa. Improving it is principally the task of the national leadership in these states, but timely external support – designed to combine capacity building with mechanisms built to ensure accountability and the restraint of the abuse of power – is essential.

**Strengthening hybrid governance.** East Africa’s weak states will not be able to manage all of the conflicts they face for some time to come – institution building is a long, slow process. Meanwhile, informal sources of governance and authority are often key to peacebuilding. Helping governments to understand appropriate partnerships with non-state actors in hybrid governance arrangements to promote peace is a role the international community can play.

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**About this Paper:** This paper is part of a series providing regional peacebuilding perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The authors’ task was to provide an authentic, original and honest analysis about three questions: (1) What are the main challenges for building peace in your region? (2) What are the key opportunities for building peace in your region over the next one or two years? (3) What would be the key support necessary to build peace in your region over the next one or two years? Is there any specific role for the UN?

**Disclaimer:** All views expressed in this article are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, or the four Platform partners: the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP); the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO).

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Central Africa

Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Charlotte Arnaud, Violette Tournier and Thierry Vircoulon

Introduction

Despite the multiplication of multi-million dollar peacebuilding programs, Central Africa is still in turmoil. In 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) completely collapsed and is currently experiencing the most dramatic crisis in its history. The United Nations (UN) sponsored peace process in the Great Lakes has stalled and political tensions are on the rise in Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Foreign peacebuilding assistance has not delivered its promises as there is no genuine consensus between international actors and post-conflict rulers whose main goal is to stay in power and perpetuate their post-conflict authoritarian rule. Despite signing peace agreements, there is little political will from ruling elites to genuinely carry out the long-term reforms defined within them. As a result, many peacebuilding programs lack coherence, coordination and political will and are, therefore, blocked. Moreover, peacebuilding ‘fatigue’ pushes international actors to slowly disengage from these policies that instead require long-term financial and political support.

The CAR collapse and the risk of reigniting conflict in the Great Lakes means it is essential to rethink peacebuilding in Central Africa. Peacebuilding support must be based on consensus building between various conflict-related parties. If a shared vision of the main actors on the ground is missing, international partners should think twice before engaging and distributing funds in such a context. Honest dialogue and assessment are needed to fix the politics of peacebuilding in Central Africa and to prevent the resumption of future conflicts.

Main challenges to building peace in Central Africa

Post-conflict authoritarian rule and the reduction of peacebuilding space

The context of the upcoming presidential elections is already reshaping the region. Unlike the previous elections, these ones represent a real stake as they may cause power changes. Indeed, the presidents of Burundi (Pierre Nkurunziza), Rwanda (Paul Kagame) and the DRC (Joseph Kabila) have completed the two mandates allowed by the constitution and are meant to...
step down in 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively. The fact that they have been strategising in order to stay in power has led to a rise of political tension. Nowadays, the issue of anti-constitutional re-election is compromising the whole peacebuilding effort in these countries.

The political space has been dramatically reduced. In Rwanda, opponents and dissidents in exile are at risk. Paul Kagame publicly declared that Rwanda ‘will continue to arrest suspects and when needed kill in broad daylight those threatening to destabilise the country’.1 State agents are allegedly involved in disappearances and political murders.2 In Burundi, the ruling party tries its best to deconstruct the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2000) and to jeopardise the ethnic-political balance that is the cornerstone of the peacebuilding process. Poor land governance and the absence of a consistent restitution policy are undermining ethnic reconciliation and fuelling resentment between Hutus and Tutsis. No sustainable solution has been implemented for the hundreds of thousands of refugees – now resettled in Burundi – who are still deprived of their lands. Moreover, the government tried to pass a constitutional review in March 2014 that failed by one single vote, aimed at strengthening the power of the executive and modifying the ethnic quota defined in the Peace Agreement. Last but not least, the grip on power is materialising through a militarisation of politics. Since the 2010 elections, the National Liberation Forces (FNL) have organised armed groups on the other side of the border (DRC) that frequently clash with the Burundian forces and, in Burundi in April 2014, the UN accused the ruling party of providing arms with the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling party.

No justice in Central Africa

Post-conflict justice has been a contentious issue in Central African peacebuilding, with many past crimes remaining incompletely addressed. Despite attempts to foster local ownership over the justice process, justice institutions are either biased or an empty shell. The ruling parties’ members’ involvement in the past crimes is the main reason why the process has always been hindered by actors in power. In Burundi, for instance, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Special Tribunal stipulated in the Arusha Peace Agreement have never been created. In fact, the government intends to put in place only the TRC and rejects the idea of prosecutions.3 In Rwanda, the gacaca courts are based on the traditional justice system. But despite its success in dealing with a massive backlog of criminal cases, the gacaca system has been criticised for its lack of impartiality and the absence of legal safeguards. In the DRC, the transitional justice process planned by the Pretoria Agreement never even got off the ground. The TRC never achieved anything during the transition (2003-2006) and, since 2006, its members have been unsuccessful in obtaining any donor support. The only answer proposed by the government so far has been a series of amnesty laws aimed at buying the peace with armed groups (the last one was passed this year to deal with the M23 fighters). The issue of post conflict justice remains unresolved, fuelling a culture of impunity and grievances that in themselves are two factors of the dynamics towards renewed conflict.

Resource-based conflicts

Conflicts over natural resources (land, minerals, timber, etc.) are part of the history of the Central Africa region. Their root causes – dating back to colonial or even pre-colonial times – are well-

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2 A former intelligence chief exiled in South Africa, Patrick Karegeya, was assassinated on 31 December 2014 and several murder attempts have been recorded by foreign intelligence agencies.
known and include poverty, overpopulation in Rwanda and Burundi, elite formation based on economic control and land conflicts between farmers and herders, among others. These long-term issues have sometimes turned into a conflict within the conflict (for example, the mining guerrilla warfare that has been prevalent in Walikale territory, North Kivu for years), but have often become invisible in the bigger picture. Most of the time, natural resources have been used as a revenue-generating mechanism by armies or armed groups. The post-conflict governments have not been willing to set up sufficient natural resource governance mechanisms that could end the war economy, reduce economic grievances and help them to manage natural resources conflicts. Despite international assistance, progress has been limited to elaborate new legal frameworks. New laws have been passed, but building capacity and institutions to manage natural resources and improving financial and ownership transparency are still very much a work in progress. Instead of improving the distribution of natural resource revenues, the post-conflict regimes try to reinforce their grip over these resources, antagonise artisanal mining communities and replicate the rent seeking strategies of their predecessors.

Peacebuilding failure in CAR

The dramatic crisis that has been occurring in CAR for almost two years is a perfect example of the limits of foreign peacebuilding assistance. The former President’s, François Bozizé, misrule slowed down the peacebuilding process and even stopped it completely at certain points, despite the fact that CAR was part of the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio, similar to Burundi. For instance, Bozizé’s governmental team did not pay attention to the need for statebuilding, in particular Security Sector Reform (SSR). Despite the UN and European Union’s (EU) willingness to support the SSR, Bozizé’s lack of political will for implementing such a reform blocked the process and weakened the security forces. The former president did not respect the terms of the Inclusive Political Dialogue signed in December 2008 and organised fraudulent elections in 2011, thus signalling that a democratic change of power was unthinkable. The state’s deliquescence has been compensated by foreign non-governmental organisations’ (NGOs) and churches’ provision of social services, budget support from the EU and World Bank to pay civil servants’ salaries, and foreign troops stationed in the country for security provision. Despite the presence of international forces in the CAR and the implementation of peacebuilding programs, the double predation committed by both political authorities and armed groups has caused state disintegration. Foreign assistance was unable to prevent the former regime from digging its own grave. In the field of public financial management, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and SSR, the advice of the donors has been ignored and even rebuffed on behalf of CAR’s ‘sovereignty’. As a result, they disengaged and let Bozizé implement his suicidal policy.

Main opportunities for building peace in Central Africa

The main peacebuilding issues that need to be addressed in Central Africa are the upcoming electoral cycle, finding the ‘right’ answer to the unsolved issue of armed groups and responding to the CAR crisis.

Managing the elections

Given the recent rise of tensions stretching from Kinshasa to Bujumbura, the third post-conflict elections are the main risk in the Great Lakes region. The usual way in which the international community deals with elections is not appropriate. Monitoring the electoral process three

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4 See the ICG report “The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilisation”.
months before the vote will not be enough to decrease the tension. The fairness of an election cannot be determined by its final result; it is the socio-political conditions in which elections were prepared that make the elections democratic or not. In Burundi, for instance, one year before the elections, the media are being intimidated, the opposition is not allowed to develop structures in rural areas and is prevented from exercising its political rights – all obstacles to fair elections. In the DRC, there is an increasing confrontation between the government and the opposition, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), members of the civil society and the opposition. The latter is poorly organised. Moreover, facing an influential INEC and a ruling party that is closing the political space, it has no means of action and little leeway. The peacebuilding agenda for elections should therefore start earlier. Monitoring the technical aspect of the elections (electoral code, census, adequate voting sites etc.) is not enough. The international community (especially the UN, African Union, EU, United States, United Kingdom, Belgium and France) should be proactive. For example, they should assess the current political contexts and clearly indicate the basic democratic requirements for national governments to get support for preparing future elections. These conditions could be based on the recommendations provided by the electoral observation reports of the last vote.

**Going beyond security in Central African Republic**

The case of CAR embodies the limits of peacebuilding programs and external interventions. Existing international intervention is a necessary response to the humanitarian and security crisis, but does not address the crisis’ direct causes. Since 1998, at least six international missions have been deployed. Yet, the situation is still far from being stabilised. The International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) led by the African Union gathered 6,000 troops, while the French mission, Sangaris, has deployed 2,600 soldiers in the field, mandated to protect the population and re-establish the security order. The European Union has also contributed troops in order to secure parts of the capital city. To deal with the root causes of the conflict, the peace operation should be combined with the fight against trafficking, economic recovery and support to re-establish state services.⁵

Given the fact that economic predation, state collapse and warlordism have become interlinked, those who want to resolve the crisis in CAR will have to simultaneously implement several measures: undermine the economic foundations of the armed groups (e.g. fight against regional and international trafficking); work to re-legitimise the state by reinitiating or starting state social services where security allows it; and provide economic opportunities for youth and militiamen through labour-intensive projects (infrastructure reconstruction, agriculture, etc.).

**Shaping the response to armed groups**

Most DDR programs in Central Africa have not achieved the desired effects, as demonstrated by the number of armed groups in the region. In cases where their implementation was relatively positive, they were nonetheless rarely complemented by a justice process (e.g. Burundi). Some DDR programs have in fact been associated with impunity and reward for crimes. One of the main challenges of peacebuilding in this region is to articulate DDR and justice in order to eliminate armed groups without sacrificing justice. Finding the right mix is key to reintegrate fighters into civilian life and to sanction the leaders who are responsible for massive human rights abuses. For sustainable community reintegration, the ‘R’ of DDR has to be prioritised by the national authorities and the donors (the new DDR program in DRC elaborated by the national government fails, for example, to provide credible socio-economic alternatives to fighters). DDR

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⁵ See the ICG report “The CAR crisis: from predation to stabilization” (2014).
has to be disconnected from SSR given the very poor state of security services in most of the countries in the region. Often, integrating former fighters into the security forces has weakened them, generating serious internal problems for already dysfunctional services. This option should only be considered when the state has robust security services.

A new generation of DDR must be invented and institutional coordination should be built between DDR and justice: screening, vetting and prosecutions should be incorporated into the DDR process right from the start.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

While post-conflict authoritarian regimes are being consolidated, political consensus is key for building peace in Central Africa. The UN is being pushed out of the region by post-conflict regimes, despite worrying indicators. The UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) will close in December 2014; the UN and Rwanda have been at odds since the genocide; two countries under the UN’s watch (CAR and South Sudan) have collapsed; the organisation has accumulated a long series of failures in Congo (the last one being the fall of Goma in November 2012), and the Congolese government has officially requested the downsizing of the UN mission. In this difficult environment, the UN Security Council members have to decide whether they want to go against the will of the post-conflict regimes or whether they want to accommodate them. However, maintaining UN missions on the ground in such a tense financial and political setting is not enough. Their peacekeeping role must be enhanced and completed by mandates to reform governance. This implies that a strong political consensus must be obtained between the various international actors involved in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction in Central Africa.

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Southern Africa
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Dimpho Motsamai

Introduction

In July 2014, Southern Africa is less violent than any other region on the African continent. With the exception of the protracted conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the recent low-intensity, localised conflict in Mozambique, the region has generally been stable. As such, unlike other regions in Africa, the major threats to Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries are principally from sources other than widespread civil conflict. Despite this, these countries are highly vulnerable to conflict as a result of deep-seated structural issues, governance challenges and a lack of national political consensus on the strategic direction of certain countries in areas ranging from economic policy to the governance agenda. However, the realities and characteristics of SADC countries vary and different context-specific factors pose ongoing risks to peace. Against this backdrop, four main typologies of countries can be identified in the region, as discussed below.

The first category of countries is made up of those in prolonged political crisis. The DRC best illustrates this as a country caught in vicious cycles of violence and insecurity. The DRC government lacks the political will to address the root causes of instability, particularly in its eastern territories; community-level grievances, such as those around land resource management, remain unheeded; and recidivism among armed groups threatens ongoing peace talks.

A second category comprises countries in post-conflict or political transitions. This includes Madagascar, with a freshly concluded democratic transition that faces an uncertain future because of the country’s political history of coups and insecurity. Mozambique, where a long-term, stagnant ‘post-conflict’ context prevails, falls into this category as a country unable to fully exit from post-conflict circumstances. It also faces the threat of insecurity ahead of its presidential and parliamentary elections in November 2014. Angola, Africa’s second-largest oil producer, has similar post-conflict statebuilding challenges.
The country is still defined as ‘failed but successful’, against the backdrop of good economic performance entrenched in a culture of corruption and government opaqueness.

The third group of countries is made up of those with deteriorating governance or rising conflict risk. This includes donor-dependent Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique, where both political will and institutional capacity pose serious challenges to development. Lesotho, for instance, has been hamstrung by an ineffective governing coalition for the last two years that is currently on the brink of collapse.

The fourth category comprises those countries going through a gradual process of reform. These include Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and the Seychelles. These countries exhibit high levels of regime legitimacy, but are variously challenged by low government effectiveness and its associated grievances among the population.

Southern Africa is also one of the most unequal regions on the planet. Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Angola are all counted among the world’s top 12 most unequal countries as measured by the Gini coefficient. In South Africa, the region’s economic giant, inequality and the legacy of apartheid have resulted in high levels of violent crime and increasing levels of violent protest. Coupled with large populations of young unemployed people, these countries are further challenged by a number of socio-economic problems, including: mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS; poverty alleviation, particularly where linear approaches in the form of social grants (particularly in Namibia and South Africa) are failing; and absorbing the negative impacts of resource booms to service delivery (in countries such as Angola and Mozambique).1

Owing to the region’s rich natural resource endowments, SADC countries also grapple with the resource curse. Despite fostering rapid economic growth in many countries in the region, natural resource abundance has also fostered various governance challenges, including corruption, criminality and income inequality, particularly in South Africa. The latter presents a challenging case of a post-resource-fuelled economy struggling to diversify and strike a balance between mining industry viability and labour market stability. This is illustrated in particular by the vicious cycle of labour unrest in the past two years.2 The DRC and Angola are two key examples of the effects of the resource curse in the region, reflected in the insularity of the ruling elite, opaque decision-making processes and widespread corruption. Newly resource-rich countries like Mozambique face the daunting and pressing task of building transparent institutions that manage their resource wealth better and meet the demands of local populations. Similarly, the debate about the management of natural resources in Tanzania is increasingly raising important questions about the nature and stability of the union between the country’s mainland and Zanzibar. This is one issue that, if not well managed, could cause instability in the country.

Another important element of the region’s political equation is that, owing to the legacy of the liberation wars, former liberation movements that became political parties rule a large number of Southern African countries. Although this has allowed a measure of continuity in political organisation, the resulting problem has been an entrenchment of dominant parties that have

2 For a detailed discussion of labour sector volatility and the challenges faced by the mining industry in South Africa, see Deloitte & Touche, Tough choices facing the South African mining industry, (Johannesburg: Deloitte & Touche, 2013).
largely weakened political opposition and stunted the maturation of political pluralism. The dominant parties – the MPLA ( Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) in Angola; FRELIMO ( Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) in Mozambique; SWAPO ( South West Africa People’s Organisation) in Namibia; the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa; and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) – have not comprehensively adapted to the demands of competitive politics internally. In the states that these dominant parties rule, democratic governance has regressed because of a weakening of the effectiveness of institutional checks and balances, often against the backdrop of weak and sometimes ineffective opposition parties. Where ruling parties have maintained strong links to state institutions, opposition parties have faced hurdles in gaining political traction. While splinter groups have emerged in some of the ruling parties, such divisions have not made much difference to ruling parties’ hegemonic control. This situation underlines the importance of building effective, accountable and participatory states that are able to manage political change, foster equitable socioeconomic development, and institutionalise a culture of government effectiveness in both their political and economic administrations.

Challenges to building peace in Southern Africa

Sustained commitment to reform is generally less advanced in most SADC countries. This is largely attributable to the following factors:

Weak statebuilding processes. In most SADC countries, state capacity to address common sources of insecurity such as political and economic marginalisation has remained fairly modest and is reflected in growing poverty, underdevelopment, youth alienation, class differentiation, and ethno-regional and racial cleavages. Statebuilding, which relies on political leadership that does not consider national institutions and resources as enclaves for personal enrichment, is arguably not manifest in SADC. The state-formation process is thus distinctly incomplete and where progress has been made in the area of institution building, existing institutions are weak and overshadowed by strong personalities. Corruption – one of the major drivers of weak state capacity – is pervasive in most SADC countries, although countries such as Botswana, the Seychelles and Namibia are recorded better than their peers in this regard.

Low government effectiveness. Government effectiveness is measured by the capacity and ability of administrative institutions to implement policies crafted by the legislative and executive branches of government. SADC member states have continually faced capacity deficits in their administrative institutions as a result of weak institutions, inadequate investment in education and low professionalism due to poor recruitment practices that are not based on merit. Bureaucratic constraints are further magnified by weak legislatures, strong executives with overbearing leaders, weakened opposition, and the ability of ruling parties to command significant policy discretion.

Weak links between (democratic) electoral events and better governance. The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority by elected governments has mostly resulted in damage to democratic institutions and the centralisation of power in SADC countries. Notwithstanding the regular holding of elections, more recently in Zambia (2011), the DRC

(2011), Mozambique (2009), Lesotho (2012), Angola (2012), Swaziland (2013), South Africa (2014) and Zimbabwe (2008 and 2013), this situation has persisted. This state of affairs can generally be attributed to the existence of dominant parties and weak political opposition in the region. Promises of better governance by newly elected governments in the above countries have not been kept, as reflected in these countries’ socioeconomic profiles that continue to be characterised by very limited progress in terms of the Human Development Index, the composite indicator of life expectancy, education attainment and income indices published annually by the United Nations Development Programme.

**Decline of personal safety and the rule of law.** The 2013 Mo Ibrahim report noted the decline of personal safety and the rule of law in Southern African countries. The report suggests that even though the region has few regional conflicts, it might experience an increase in domestic and social unrest due to the deterioration of justice and safety. This is largely a factor of rising crime trends, which are also the result of historical factors and high youth unemployment.

**Inefficient natural resource management.** The significance of ‘new’ sources of conflict, such as land, forests, tourism and marine resources, is on the rise in the SADC region. This includes the ongoing dispute between Malawi and Tanzania about border demarcation in Lake Malawi; the management of the shared water resources of the Zambezi river system, which affects eight countries (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe); and secessionism involving land-related disputes in Zambia, Tanzania and Namibia.

**Socioeconomic marginalisation.** This is both a cause and consequence of fragility and bad governance. In all SADC countries, skewed resource allocation and distribution have widened the gap between political elites and the masses, while increasing the political disempowerment of the majority of the populations. The high unemployment rate in SADC has created a growing concern that in conjunction with high levels of poverty and inequality, these pressures will translate into economic grievance-related social unrest and political insecurity.

**Food insecurity.** This continues to be a chronic problem, particularly in Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland. The July 2013 SADC Food Security Update reported that the regional vulnerability assessment showed an increase in the number of people that are food insecure, rising from 12 million in 2012 to 14 million in one year. In addition, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that 95 million people in SADC are undernourished, with the largest numbers being in the DRC, Madagascar, Zambia, Angola and Mozambique. The problem of food insecurity is a product of a number of complex factors that include: decades of lack of investment in the agricultural sector; unfair trade practices; high levels of post-harvest losses; poor governance; the lack of access to productive resources such as land and water; the deterioration of rural infrastructure; unsustainable land management practices; social inequalities (gender, ethnic

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5 The rule of law is a principle intended to be a safeguard against arbitrary governance by insisting that government authority is legitimately exercised only in accordance with written, publicly disclosed laws that are adopted and enforced in accordance with established procedures.


7 See, SADC (Southern African Development Community), SADC Food Security Early Warning System Update, 1 (July 2013).
and others); and structural inadequacies in the agricultural and macroeconomic policy frameworks, among others.

The regional response to tackle these challenges by the SADC Secretariat has been hampered by a lack of traction on policy implementation, despite progress in the adoption of policy frameworks. Two such policy frameworks – the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO) – act as the main anchors for regional peacebuilding in the secretariat. The RISDP is the socioeconomic development ‘interventionist’ framework for SADC member states. It strongly emphasises tackling the challenges of uneven development among countries, ubiquitous poverty and inequality, among other issues. The SIPO, on the other hand, is SADC’s political and security counterpart directed at promoting good governance and democracy in the organisation’s member states. Both the SIPO and RISDP serve as relatively comprehensive frameworks for strengthening governance and development in the region. However, the implementation of these frameworks lags in SADC member states – it is uneven in some cases and non-existent in others. The SIPO – SADC’s political governance framework – is probably the least implemented by member states, since it impinges more directly on domestic politics, which is the domain of which member states are most protective. In the broader scheme of human security in the region, the inadequate implementation of both the SIPO and RISDP leads to failures in the regional response to human security challenges.

Opportunities for building peace in Southern Africa

Political and governance analysis strongly shapes peacebuilding programmes. The challenge to development organisations and those involved in peacebuilding in any environment is to sufficiently capture key aspects of state vulnerability that adequately reflect underlying ‘cultures of power’ (i.e. informal power hierarchies) and the ‘rules of the game’. Highlighting the key objectives of their interventions is related to such analyses. Furthermore, if the engagement is to address both a lack of political will and a lack of capacity, a clearer understanding of the reasons for state failure or vulnerability is needed, which will vary from country to country. Furthermore, there is growing recognition of the need to understand the political incentives and institutions that affect the prospects for reform. These interventions ideally seek to directly address the underlying causes of conflict and fragility, support inclusive political settlements, help build state capacity for service delivery, and assist states to meet the expectations of marginalised groups, including women and children.

However, opportunities for supporting government capacity in peacebuilding activities hinge on the openness to the engagement of the governments in question. As discussed, the majority of SADC member states have strong executives and weak parliaments. Some have hobbed parliamentary capacity and are completely unable to change undemocratic status quo. This dynamic replicates itself at the SADC policy and institutional levels. For instance, SADC’s decision-making processes are centralised in its annual Summits of Heads of State, to which its security and political governance institution – the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation – is also accountable. As such, the predominance of heads of state in SADC has reinforced positions aimed at preserving national sovereignty. Additionally, the principle of solidarity that guided Southern Africa’s national liberation struggles has placed a premium on

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8 See SADC (Southern African Development Community), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2003 & 2008) and SADC Strategic Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (2010).
the autonomy of states rather than using SADC instruments for genuine peer review. Historical
talities forged among national liberation movements, which have become ruling parties in
countries across the sub-region, including in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Angola and
Moambique, can often also lead to empathetic diplomatic postures instead of criticism where
it is warranted. Where there are disagreements between these states, they are resolved
informally on the sidelines of SADC meetings rather than in the sub-regional body’s open
sessions, which consequently radically reduces the SADC’s governance oversight role.

At the SADC institutional level, many problems persist with regard to the financial and human
resources capacity of the secretariat. The difficult relationships the SADC Organ on Politics,
Defence and Security Cooperation has with its donors – referred to as international cooperating
partners (ICPs) – when it comes to the financing of political and security initiatives aimed at
strengthening peacebuilding in the region are particularly sensitive. Normally, such ICP funding is
equated with foreign interference in the domestic affairs of SADC states, despite the SADC
Organ being the interlocutor of the relationship. The sensitivity over ICP partnerships is also linked
to the foreign policy posture of the particular SADC member state that holds the rotating
chairmanship of the institution. This may therefore be a stronger factor with Zimbabwe’s chairing
of the SADC institution for a year from August 2014.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

**Nurturing relevant partnerships within SADC.** While SADC can be labelled as a ‘difficult’ partner
in terms of the peace and security affairs of its member states, ways should be sought to
strengthen the SADC Secretariat’s framework for enhancing member states’ peacebuilding
capacities. This remains a constant challenge. The areas of specific importance include the
following:

- **Early warning.** Arguably, SADC’s early warning culture is underdeveloped, secretive, and
tainted by an overriding security and intelligence posture. There is therefore the urgent need
for the region to develop a non-military framework for a comprehensive early warning
system of the kind currently operated by the Economic Community of West African States
and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. This is because non-military early
warning issues generally focus on initiatives best suited to peacebuilding purposes. Possible
cross-cutting themes that might be suitable for a non-military SADC early warning
mechanism are in the areas of governance and public administration, disaster-risk
minimisation, food security and climate-change impacts. A regional early warning
mechanism should also encourage NGOs based in member states to support these
mechanisms. Ways should also be sought to involve NGOs in policy development and
response processes by virtue of the fact that they are most directly affected by government
actions.

- **Elections and democratic governance.** The SADC Secretariat has an under-profiled
institution called the Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) established to promote common
values in election management, democracy, good governance and the observance of
human rights in the region. SEAC’s role in promoting good democratic governance during
electoral cycles is embryonic, however, as demonstrated by its limited impact in the five

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9 These are old challenges, as discussed in L. Giuffrida and H. Müller-Glodde, ‘Strengthening SADC institutional
structures: capacity development is the key to the SADC Secretariat’s effectiveness’, *Monitoring Regional
SADC member states’ elections in 2014. SEAC’s interface with civil society organisations could also be improved. Indeed, the improved institutionalisation and implementation of SADC election codes as advocated by SEAC, and the treatment of civil society as a partner in the democratisation process before and after elections, could assist significantly with the strengthening of election-linked democracy.

- Public administration and good governance. In addition to the above, the interaction of the SADC Secretariat with member states should foster institutional and policy development that promotes economic growth, the effective management of resource, institution building and the rule of law in member states. This dynamic is not yet manifest.

Working with in-country institutions and peacebuilding structures. This would be similar to what is called the ‘drivers of change’ approach. Its key elements include the need to understand (1) a country’s history and people; (2) who the holders of power are and how power is brokered and used; (3) the informal ‘rules of the game’ (e.g. how patronage networks operate in government and business); and (4) the relationship between the latter and formal institutions (e.g. appointments to the executive and judiciary). The approach should be geared to assisting SADC governments in embracing reforms that improve public administration and institutionalise good governance as part of peacebuilding interventions. The reform of government institutions, particularly those responsible for the rule of law, core social services and food security, should be given priority. There should also be space to support reformers outside government, particularly those advocating improvements in security, human rights, core services, food security, natural resource management and anti-corruption activities.

Identifying strategic priorities and programming. While peacebuilding approaches should emphasise political, economic, social and security factors, these priorities have to be seen as interrelated and not mutually exclusive. From this perspective, key considerations that govern engagement would include the ability of any assistance that is offered to affect constructive change; the underlying sources of vulnerability – the governing arrangements that lack effectiveness and legitimacy – rather than the symptoms; and whether short-term impacts can be linked to longer-term structural reforms.

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About this Paper: This paper is part of a series providing regional peacebuilding perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The authors’ task was to provide an authentic, original and honest analysis about three questions: (1) What are the main challenges for building peace in your region? (2) What are the key opportunities for building peace in your region over the next one or two years? (3) What would be the key support necessary to build peace in your region over the next one or two years? Is there any specific role for the UN?

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About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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Central America

Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Bernardo Arévalo de Leon and Ana Glenda Táger

Introduction

The last internal armed conflict in Central America ended more than 17 years ago. The peace accords reached in the three countries that suffered internal armed conflict succeeded in effectively integrating armed dissidents into the political process and consolidated democratic political frameworks that, notwithstanding their dysfunctions and limitations, respond to the basic principles of a political democracy.1 Yet, almost two decades later, the region remains one of the most violent in the world. The peace accords and formal democracy have not brought an end to violence. In El Salvador and Guatemala, violence has reached levels higher than those that characterised the war years. In Honduras, no civil war has taken place, but the country has the highest murder rates in the region and violence has become a chronic occurrence of everyday life. Even in Costa Rica, Panama and Belize, the indicators for violent deaths increased during the first decade of the century.2

But it’s not only about murder rates. International and national dynamics are combining to form socio-political phenomena that generate new patterns of conflict and violence, an interplay between longer-term legacies and emerging driving factors. Today, violence emerges mostly in the context of phenomena that war-time factors contributed to, but do not entirely explain: an increase in transnational crime flows; a breakdown of social tissue in marginalised urban areas; the limited capacity of states to effectively mediate conflict in society, and the appropriation of violence by social actors as a recourse to pursue their interests. Moreover, violence is linked to social polarisation around the use of natural resources and state capture by illegitimate and criminal actors preventing the consolidation of democratic institutions and the emergence of social peace.

Central American countries are critical peacebuilding scenarios. In the face of such complex problems, traditional developmental approaches need to be complemented by the implementation of peacebuilding approaches that strengthen elements of social and political cohesion. Indeed, peacebuilding as a concept and practice has evolved since its inception in the late 1990s. Born in the context of international efforts to assist countries emerging from conflict and initially conceived of as a ‘phase’ occurring along a sequential path towards a neat, precise schematisation of ‘peaceful’ social reality, it has since become evident that sustainable peace is not limited to a specific period of time. Rather, its aim is to develop the capacities – the social, political and economic institutions within societies – to manage and transform conflict without recourse to violent coercion. Peacebuilding is, therefore, core to statebuilding processes and a new angle through which we can understand the continuous, but unique, challenges countries face in this process.

Fortunately, there is no lack of agency for peace in the Central America region: actors in the state and society are exploring innovative ‘out-of-the-box’ approaches and beginning to make inroads into seemingly intractable problems. International assistance is required to support efforts already in place, initiated by national actors. The international community should commit its political, technical and financial support to enabling Central American stakeholders in state and society to scale-up and mainstream innovative, often controversial but effective approaches to the consolidation of peace and eradication of violence.

**Challenges to building peace in Central America**

The peacebuilding agenda in Central America is a response to the challenges posed by this complex situation. International support should be developed taking into account three key factors:

- **The erosion of the state monopoly over violent coercion**: a proliferation of arms and weak state security and justice institutions has led to a ‘democratisation’ of violence in which violent coercion becomes a recourse available to all social actors. Traditional security state functions have been ‘privatized’ by groups and individuals through phenomena such as the proliferation of private security companies and vigilantism.

- **The development of ‘uncivil society’**: individuals and groups in society progressively turn to crime and violence as a way to pursue their social, economic, political or personal interests, and violence becomes ‘normalised’ – an available recourse to resolve any difference of opinions or interests in social life.

- **The progressive weakening of state institutions**: security institutions unable to deal with the surge of violence themselves turn to authoritarian responses that compound the problem. State security and justice capacities are moreover captured by criminal actors that use them not only to prevent prosecution, but to further their trade. As a result of inefficiency, state capture or both, impunity increases and consequently the affected population withdraws its support from emerging democratic institutions.

These factors together comprise three socio-political phenomena that currently pose the biggest challenges to the consolidation of peace in Central America: crime as a threat to social peace; natural resources development as a source of social conflict; and state capture by private and criminal interests.

**Criminal violence**

Criminal activity turning Central America’s ‘Northern Triangle’ – El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala – into one of the most violent regions on earth has featured prominently in
Patterns of violence here are the result of a combination of transnational and national factors. A surge in the transnational illicit traffic of drugs, arms, goods and persons has combined with traditional international security responses favouring militarised approaches. At the national level, depleted state capacities to efficiently and effectively address these problems, the growth of corruption and clientelism, and an authoritarian political culture sustain violent governmental and social responses that only exacerbate violence. Sicariato, drug cartel warfare, vigilantism and lynching, domestic violence, youth violence and social cleansing, etc. are expressions of violence that take place at different levels, in different realms of society.

A concrete example is the phenomenon known as ‘maras’. Originally established by young illegal immigrants repatriated from the US’ West Coast, where they had been immersed in the violent culture of street gangs, these youth gangs provided a sense of identity and belonging in an environment marked by social exclusion, crumbling family structures and a lack of economic opportunities. Gangs became factors of ever-increasing violence exercised upon themselves and their social environment, and encroached on the livelihoods of already impoverished communities, extorting money from big businesses and local businessmen using murder as a credible threat. ‘Iron fist’ response policies used by governments have not only been ineffective, but have exacerbated the problem: implemented by a weak and ineffective justice and security system, harsh legislation criminalised not just the delinquent activity of gang members but membership in a gang itself, turning every youth living in impoverished communities into a potential target of repressive policies. Governmental policy has not only failed to stop the violence, but its own violent approach – pure repression, little regard for the human rights of gang members and their families and criminalisation of a social group – has become a violence-generating factor in itself.

Drug trafficking is another significant source of violence. Central American countries are transit points for international drug cartels moving narcotics between producing regions in South America and consumer markets in North America and Europe. In each country of the region, local criminal gangs engage with international Mexican and Colombian criminal organisations to transport the products via sky, sea and land routes. Fledgling democratic institutions, especially in the justice and security sectors, limited state control of and presence in the national territory, and widespread corruption at every level of government have enabled international and local criminal organisations to establish a presence and to penetrate state institutions. Whole towns have been known to be under the total control of drug cartels. National institutions have been neutralised through the recruitment of governmental authorities into the cartels.

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5 An example of the societal dimensions of the problem is in El Salvador: here, 10,000 gang members are in jail and 60,000 are in the streets, yet if we consider their social network of family and friends, then the phenomenon involves more like 400,000 persons, or about 8% of the Salvadorian population.

(including elected officials, police and military officers, judges and justice sector operators) and through alliances with businessmen. Groups like Los Cachiros and Valles in Honduras, or the Lorenzana and Chamalé in Guatemala operate in broad daylight and use unbridled violence in their confrontation with the security agencies and competition for the control of routes and posts, generating a heightened sense of insecurity in a population already rendered vulnerable through governmental incapacity.7

The social violence generated by criminal activities has had negative impacts on the consolidation of fledging democratic institutions, reinforcing authoritarian enclaves in the security apparatus, preventing the effective monopolisation of violence by the state, eroding public support for democracy, marginalising social groups and breeding mistrust of public institutions.8 A public security problem has therefore turned into a political crisis. What is at stake is the possibility of eradicating violence and coercion from social and political relations, and consolidating the social and political institutions that can enable this goal: a clear peacebuilding challenge.

Social conflict over natural resources

In the last few years, Central America has been witnessing the development of a pattern of social conflict around issues of access, use and conservation of natural resources. Private and governmental initiatives seeking to develop energy, agricultural or mineral resources are met with resistance and rejection from local communities that consider themselves marginalised from the benefits of such endeavours and negatively affected by their environmental impact. Hydro-power projects, mining activities and land-intensive agricultural projects generate tensions with local communities around issues of pollution, deforestation, access to and use of traditional territories and protected areas, and the economic impact of these initiatives in neighbouring communities. The absence of a social culture of dialogue and the lack of adequate mediation and conflict transformation capacities – both in the state and in society – have turned these development opportunities into open confrontations between interested groups, including private actors, government agencies, local (often indigenous) communities. Explosions of violence deepen mistrust and entrench a polarisation of the actors’ positions, enhancing the intractability of the problems.

In Guatemala, conflicts around the expansion of palm oil cultivation have led to confrontation and forced displacement of indigenous communities in Alta Verapaz; resistance to hydroelectric initiatives in their territories have led local communities to burn company property and ransack a military outpost in Huehuetenango; and a death and several injured persons resulted from a governmental decision to disperse a peaceful sit-in by local communities blocking access to a mining project in San Rafael Las Flores, in the east of the country.9 In Panama, several roads in Las Veraguas and Chiquirí provinces have been blocked by local campesino and indigenous communities, who claim irregularities in the licencing of environmental permits for the development of hydroelectric projects.10 In Honduras, social movements and human rights campaigners have denounced the murder of several campesino activists in the Bajo Aguán region in the context of disputes between local communities and

landowners, while police units forcibly dispersed representatives from indigenous communities protesting the implementation of the Aguas Zarcas hydroelectric project.\textsuperscript{11}

Proliferation of conflict around economic initiatives results from the precarious nature of the social contract. In most of Central American countries, neither the peace accords nor the political democratic process have succeeded in articulating a shared vision and strategy for the future that acknowledge, legitimise and mediate the contrasting needs and interests of culturally diverse and deeply unequal societies. Authoritarian ‘enclaves’ of values, ideologies, attitudes and mechanisms continue to operate under a logic of coercive domination and imposition/resistance, which in the context of weak and ineffective state institutions enhances contradictions, breeds polarisation and contributes to fostering violent conflict.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{State capture}

In several countries in the region, clientelist political cultures and widespread corruption are threatening the emergence of effective state institutions that can articulate a peaceful and sustainable social contract. Particular interests are encroaching upon key state structures at every level of government. The workings of the justice system, parliament, executive branch (including security agencies), as well as municipal governments are being leveraged by certain interests, often illegitimate and illegal, in doing so betraying the democratic principles enshrined in national legislations.

Drug cartels openly control large territories along transit routes in rural Guatemala with the collaboration and connivance of municipal authorities and local National Civilian Police, who provide coverage and protection to drug lords that combine violent threats with investment in social infrastructure as a way to control the local population. Local families in Petén, Guatemala engage simultaneously in legitimate commercial activities and in illegal trafficking networks linked to regional and national drug cartels.\textsuperscript{13}

The negative effects of state capture are manifold and complex. Rule of Law cannot be developed and implemented. State functions – security, development, and political integration – cannot be properly fulfilled. Public goods cannot be produced or delivered according to principles of efficiency and effectiveness. Political parties do not mediate between legitimate social interests and political authority. The legitimacy of political authority is eroded, trust in public institutions wanes and society becomes mistrustful and cynical.

\textbf{Opportunities for building peace in Central America}

Peacebuilding strategies offer alternative approaches to address such critical challenges to peace in the region. By focusing on long-term strategies that strengthen capacities for non-violent conflict transformation in state and society, and contributing to the development of strong and healthy state-society relations, peacebuilding approaches can complement more traditional developmental approaches by fostering trust and legitimacy, critical components of cohesive and peaceful societies.

Two areas appear as critical entry points:

1. **Fostering state/society collaboration to address mounting insecurity**

Traditional, technical ‘statebuilding’ support to governmental bureaucracies on security and justice issues needs to be coupled with process-sensitive approaches that place citizen participation as an essential element. Working to foster collaboration across the state/society divide is important to prevent mistrust and alienation between citizens and security forces, as well as to allow the development of effective synergies addressing the insecurity crisis and judicial impunity. Such an approach can offer important outcomes:

- **At a regional level**, the facilitation of regional spaces and mechanisms for collaborative research and policy dialogue to foster a deeper understanding of transnational crime and insecurity dynamics, facilitate the identification of successful experiences, and foster synergies for the design and implementation of effective policies.

- **At a national level**, civil society participation in legislative and policy development efforts can contribute to enrich the debate on legal and operational justice and security frameworks, balancing the authoritarian and violent-prone approaches still favoured by some security sector apparatchiks and politicians, and contributing to the development of a broadly legitimate legal corpus.

- **At a local level**, citizen involvement in community policing frameworks and local security can assist in the implementation of policies that hold both the community and public agents jointly responsible, allowing security forces to enhance their information and insight into crimes, and preventing phenomena such as the alienation of poor communities, mob justice and the criminalisation of poverty.

- **At all levels**, civil society observatories can play a supportive role in the development and improvement of institutional performance. Such a policy implementation monitoring function can be achieved via collaborative arrangements with public institutions.

2. **Building upon successful and innovative peacebuilding approaches**

The peacebuilding capacity of Central American societies has been evidenced by the active engagement of the state and society in a range of innovative, creative approaches to outstanding challenges. There is a need to identify, support and empower such actors. This and other ‘out-of-the-box’ efforts will require a combination of political, technical and financial support to enable stakeholders to scale-up and mainstream innovative and often controversial approaches.

Some concrete examples include:

- **In El Salvador**, collaboration between state officials and civil society actors facilitated the engagement of warring gangs in a truce process that resulted in a dramatic reduction of violence. The engagement of criminal actors through civil society allowed governmental officials to explore conditions under which homicidal violence could be contained. The reduction of violence enabled actors in civil society and the state to engage gang representatives at the local level to agree on the creation of ‘violence...’

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14 The two main gangs in El Salvador, MS-13 and Barrio 18, agreed to establish a truce in March 2012. The truce was facilitated by a representative of the Catholic Church, Bishop Fabio Colindres, and a former guerrilla commander and congressman, Raúl Mijango. The truce had an immediate and significant impact on the levels of violence in the country; murder rates dropped from a daily average of 17 homicides to 5.5. See I. Aguilar, B. Arévalo and A. G. Táger, ‘El Salvador: Negotiating with gangs’, op cit.; Ó. Argüeta and A. G. Táger, ‘Paz, seguridad y prevención de conflictos en Centroamérica’, Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales (CRIES), forthcoming 2014.
free' territories, including the development of municipal policies enabling effective reintegration of youth into the community.15

- In Nicaragua, a preventive approach to policing based on close collaboration between security agencies and communities resulted in an effective reduction of crime and violence with indicators well below the regional and Latin American averages.16 Effective integration of civil society into security policy design and implementation (25,000 members of Committees for Social Prevention of Violence; 76,000 members of Citizen Power Cabinets; 3,900 volunteers against domestic violence; and 1,300 County Security Committees) has allowed a police force with the lowest density ratio in the region – 9 agents per square kilometre – to extend their reach into urban and rural communities, stressing the importance of preventive work on issues such as youth violence and domestic violence prevention.

- In contrast with the heightened confrontation affecting other regions, in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala collaboration between national international development agencies, local authorities, civil society organisations and the local indigenous population has enabled the successful implementation of community-managed hydroelectric projects. A process-oriented approach using participatory methodologies has enabled all stakeholders to engage constructively around these initiatives, from consultation to implementation, empowering the communities to become effective administrators of their natural resources.17

- Elsewhere in Guatemala, civil society organisations have taken a pro-active approach to combat the encroachment of illegitimate and criminal interests into state institutions. Ad hoc coalitions have brought civil society organizations together (including public associations, academics and non-governmental organizations) to successfully collaborate with conscientious actors in state institutions in public campaigns aiming to prevent the manipulation through clientelistic and corrupt practices of legally-established selection processes in state institutions, such as the General Attorney’s Office and the Supreme Court.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

The region’s peacebuilding agenda outlined above does not substitute more traditional developmental approaches to the governance and security issues that lie at the heart of the current crises in these countries. Rather, it calls for such approaches to be sensitised to peacebuilding. The process-oriented emphasis of peacebuilding delivers critical outcomes necessary for the strengthening of Central American capacities for peace, such as enhanced trust between social groups, transformed attitudes and renewed social networks that enable inter-sectorial collaboration and foster legitimised governmental institutions.

This is not an agenda for the future, but a current one. Central Americans – national governments, civil societies and regional organs – are already engaging in some of these issues with different levels of success. The international community (including bilateral donors, multilateral organizations, such as the Organisation of American States (OAS), the United Nations

16 13 homicides per 100,000 persons. The rates for Central America and Latin America are 35 and 26, respectively, with rates of 42, 69 and 78 for neighbouring Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, respectively. OEA, ‘Información sobre Seguridad Ciudadana en las Américas’, Washington DC, 2012.
17 25 indigenous communities are benefiting from 4 small-scale hydroelectric plants after a process that started with consultations in 2009 went into operation in 2014. The project is the result of a collaboration between the local non-governmental organisation, Fundación Solar, local municipal authorities, the Ministry of Energy and the International Cooperation Agency of Japan.
(UN), international non-governmental organizations and foundations) should act to support such initiatives and actors.

Such support should be provided according to the following key principles:

- Build upon the capacity and insight of local actors, strengthening both their technical and dialogical skills, anchoring cooperation processes in strong national ownership and aiming for the institutionalisation of capacities in both state and society.
- Enhance collaboration across the state/society divide, using every intervention as an opportunity to foster the development of skills and attitudes that lie at the basis of inter-sectorial collaborative networks.
- Enhance coordination and synergy among different stakeholders – primarily among national stakeholders and then with the international community. This is necessary to prevent the development of contradictions and redundancies resulting from uncoordinated cooperation flows.

Sustained flows of assistance – financial, technical and political – that build on existing capacities, respect locally-driven agendas and processes, and emphasise collaboration across the state/society divide can provide effective support to improve the conditions in which Central Americans address a governance and security crisis that, if unresolved, will entrench violence in society and render meaningless the promise of peace that resulted from the end of armed conflicts.

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South America
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Eduarda Passarelli Hamann

Introduction

Over the last two decades, South America has experienced a decline of traditional conflicts and a rise of ‘unconventional’ violence. Current territorial disputes – such as those between Bolivia and Paraguay or Chile, Argentina and Chile, or Venezuela and Guyana – are expressions of centennial conflicts of interests that still reinforce differences and consolidate age-old rivalries. However, in the past few decades, these instabilities have not led to open warfare. ‘Peace’ in the orthodox sense – no active political confrontation and warfare – has finally become a rule in the region, albeit a fragile one. Inter-state incidents are almost inexistent; the last examples include Peru and Ecuador (1995), and Venezuela and Colombia (2008).

But the lack of trust among several South American countries has created the need to effectively safeguard the region to prevent intra-regional armed conflicts. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, all South American countries have developed confidence-building measures such as the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the abandonment of nuclear programs, among others. These initiatives supported the consolidation of a ‘no-war zone’, which was recently rephrased to a more positive expression, ‘zona de paz’ or ‘peace zone’. Fostered by regional and sub-regional organisations, such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the overall process also took advantage of the consolidation of democracy and economic growth.

The current peace and security architecture reflects an historical approach by Latin American countries in general and emphasises non-interference in domestic issues, territorial inviolability and sovereignty. Nevertheless, the real challenge to peace comes from unconventional forms of violence. Examples include armed conflicts in Colombia (FARC and paramilitary groups) and in Peru (Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path), and situations of armed violence in urban settings in Brazil. Across South America, governments, private sector actors and civil society groups are experimenting with new methods and approaches to building peace from below, especially at the city level.
This paper is structured in three main sections. Section 1 presents issues related to conventional violence in South America and the existent peacebuilding structure to prevent and contain it. Section 2 tackles the current status of non-conventional violence, which is in fact the main threat to peace in the region. Finally, Section 3 explores key opportunities to build peace in South America in the near future. Despite the serious limitations, this relatively recent and very dynamic situation also provides opportunities to explore different and innovative policies that could lead to positive change.

Challenges to building peace in South America

Conventional conflicts and the South American peace and security architecture

Most armed conflicts among South American countries were solved in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the second half of the 20th century, more specifically, several protracted conflicts throughout the region were overcome by dictatorships, which were then replaced by a wave of democracies in the early 1990s. In 2014, the list of unsolved situations that could eventually escalate into open warfare include the Chaco War (Bolivia and Paraguay), the Pacific War (Bolivia and Chile), the Beagle Channel dispute (Chile and Argentina) and the dispute in the Essequibo region (Venezuela and Guyana). Recent tensions between Argentina and an extra-regional player, the United Kingdom, could also be included.

Hot issues among South American countries often relate to territorial integrity and include lack of border delimitation and even lack of demarcation, especially in forested areas, dating to the colonial era. Peace is still fragile in the region and was, in fact, a major element to animate the efforts towards regional integration in three dimensions: economic, political and security.

The most relevant regional organization for building peace is the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, South America has been portrayed as a no-war region, or, more recently, ‘zona de paz’, which is explicitly reflected in all UNASUR documents. The organisation is today the main regional forum to exchange information and promote transparency on security and defense in order to build mutual confidence among its members; that is, all South American countries. It was through UNASUR that states were able to handle constitutional crises in Ecuador and Paraguay, as well as to settle a dispute between Venezuela and Colombia (2008). It is also a space for a common defense policy, especially to protect the region’s natural resources against outsiders.

There are clear limitations to the incipient and precarious peacebuilding structure of the region. First, behind regional and sub-regional organisations that deal with political and security issues, such as the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), Alianza Bolivariana para as Americas (ALBA), or Andean Community of Nations (CAN), there is a mindset privileging the principles and norms that cemented stability in the region in the last century. These include utmost respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity, very much linked to a fear of interference in domestic

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2 The latest example is the Outcome Document of CELAC’s II Summit, held at La Habana, Cuba, on 28-29 January 2014.
affairs, either as an inheritance from colonial times or to avoid neo-colonialism, for example through the United States’ influence.

By reinforcing these principles and norms, South American countries tend not to include situations or tensions concerning the borders of one another, or internal matters that could affect regional, national or even local security, in their foreign policy calculations. This masks a reality of existing and increasing situations of armed violence inside most of these countries, making it very difficult to overcome some of the key challenges to building peace. As a consequence, real progress has been frustrated by a lack of genuine integration. What is emerging are separate sub-regional ‘political’ and ‘economic’ communities, emphasising prosperity as the model for stability and apparently ignoring that unequal growth has an impact on high levels of lethal violence, thus threatening stability.4

South America and the intensification of unconventional violence

Data gathered in the first decade of the 21st century clearly indicates that the main threats to peace in South America come, in fact, from unconventional forms of violence. Factors such as rapid and uncoordinated urbanization, inequality, chronic unemployment, institutional underdevelopment and impunity, as well as a repressive war on drugs have triggered spiraling rates of violence within countries and cities in the region. This is often recurrent, and many countries are experiencing repeated cycles of criminal violence.5

According to the 2012 Report on Citizen Security, published by the Organization of American States, the average homicide rate in South America has dropped considerably from 2000 to 2010, from 26.1% to 21.1%. In the same period, the average rate in the Western hemisphere has also decreased, albeit less significantly, from 16.4% to 15.6%. When compared to other sub-regions of the Americas, homicide has dramatically increased in Central America (from 26.6% in 2000 to 43.3% in 2010) and remained more or less stable in the Caribbean (from 16.4% to 21.9%), but especially in North America (from 7.3% to 7.8%).6 It is also relevant to note that, between 2005 and 2009, 25% of all violent deaths in the world happened in only 14 countries – half of them in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Colombia and Venezuela, but also El Salvador, Jamaica, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize.7 In Brazil alone, more than 50,000 people were killed by firearms in 2013.8

These pressures are particularly intense in border areas, which are often no-man’s lands. In Latin America as a whole and South America more specifically, border areas are highly complex spaces, often marked not only by lethal violence, but also forced displacement of people (including human trafficking), the existence of illegal groups, state corruption and a general sense of impunity. In some cases, these issues have undermined governance, forcing governments to cede authority over some areas to criminal groups. Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela are key cases. In the north of the region, for example, Colombian borders are remarkably turbulent, especially near Venezuela and Ecuador. This led the Ecuadorian government to accuse Colombia of bringing its domestic issue to three Ecuadorian provinces by the border, becoming the most violent in the country. In the south, Ciudad del Este – a Paraguayan city in the tri-state border area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay – has become a

4 World Health Organisation, ‘Preventing violence and reducing its impact: how development agencies can help’.
safe haven for money laundering, smuggling and suspicious activities with radical Islamic communities.9

Parallel to that, South America retains three of the most wanted assets of the 21st century: oil, land and water. Despite holding only 6% of the world’s population and about 12% of the global territory, South America grasps almost 20% of the global proved oil reserves,10 25% of the world’s arable land and 23% of all freshwater reserves.11 Legal or illegal disputes over these and other natural resources found in the region (timber and gold, among others) will certainly become a major issue for disturbing peace. This is already true for disputes among countries and as sources for power disputes among transnational and local illegal groups.

As of today, drugs are the main fuel for most armed violence situations in the region. They play a direct role in influencing high homicide rates (especially among youth), including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions and overpopulation in prisons, among others.12 Recent and unprecedented developments at the regional level (UNASUR and OAS) and national level (Uruguay) have triggered a serious debate on the regional drug policy. In 2012, the Uruguayan Ministry of Defense declared that the war on drugs did not reduce consumption and, what is worse, contributed to making trafficking networks increasingly violent.13 In the same year, during UNASUR meetings in Cartagena, Colombia, the former UNASUR Secretary General, María Emma Mejía, declared that ‘the war on drugs has failed’ and that non-military solutions need to be found.14 One year later, the OAS launched two unparalleled reports on the matter, and its General Assembly opened debates aimed at developing a comprehensive policy to drug issues in the Americas.15 The expectations are that these changes, if effectively implemented, could influence stability in the region and may lead to a new drug policy at the global level.

Opportunities for building peace in South America

Building peace in such a complex environment requires long-term planning and a list of recommendations to be potentially explored. These could include the following themes: (a) strengthening effective regional integration; (b) focusing on an expanded concept of prevention and early diplomacy; (c) working at the normative level to strengthen regimes that would discourage transnational crimes; (d) fostering South-South and triangular cooperation; and (e) incentivising positive bilateral or triangular experiences.

Strengthening effective regional integration. Fostering and deepening regional integration is key to strengthening not only the relations between countries, but also to create stronger mechanisms to protect and regulate borders that could potentially be overseen by regional supragovernmental bodies. This should promote a broader perspective of regional integration, one that goes beyond state-level conflict issues. In a 2012 meeting of the South American Defense Council – UNASUR’s body for defense and security – held in Cartagena, Colombia,

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10 Thanks to Venezuela (211.2 billion barrels), and to a lesser extent, Brazil (14 billion barrels) in 2012.
15 Ibid.
participating ministers discussed for the first time the idea of creating a specific council for crime and security, especially for transnational organised crimes, possibly involving Ministries of Justice and Interior. It remains to be seen when, how and what format this new council, which is still to be created, will have. But this could be a key opportunity to effectively influence the scope of South American integration, since it would deal with the major issues that challenge peace and security in the region.

**Developing an expanded concept of prevention.** Strengthening the focus on prevention and early diplomacy is essential, but through an expanded lens: one that includes not only conflict but also the prevention of violence at all levels (regional, national and city levels). This implies creating policies, programs and measures to prevent crime and violence, including projects related to gender-based violence and the protection of victims. It is also relevant to better control and regulate the main triggers of violence in the region: alcohol, drugs and weapons. Solutions to these problems should not, however, be purely based on repressive and punitive measures, such as those implemented in some countries in the region, but should be centered on progressive and humane policies focused on prevention. The World Bank, for example, has suggested a three-fold approach to prevent conflict and violence, and to allow the adequate reconstruction of nations and states, focusing activities on citizen security, justice and jobs.

**Strengthening regimes to discourage transnational crimes.** Treaties of direct relevance to conflict and violence prevention must be signed, ratified and effectively implemented in the region. As of April 2014, the Arms Trade Treaty was signed by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay, but ratified by none. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela have not even signed it. This is due not only to the fact that these four countries are domestically involved in armed violence (Brazil is too), but mainly due to the lack of trust that still reigns among them.

**Fostering South-South and triangular cooperation.** South-South and triangular cooperation have a pro-active role to promote peace and to dismantle transnational crimes. There are sensitivities around border control, again due to the lack of trust, but positive examples include efforts to improve community policing and enhance judicial/human rights provisions in third countries. It would be worth exploring opportunities to foster networks of South American cities that are investing in peace architectures – especially through progressive violence prevention activities, crime prevention and environmental design measures. Recent findings indicate that the most effective citizen security activities were implemented at the city level and include positive experiences in Bogotá, Cali and Medellín (Colombia), Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (Brazil), among others.

**Incentivising positive experiences.** Highlighting and incentivising positive bilateral or triangular experiences in promoting peace by South America could be extremely significant. Several countries in the region, like Brazil and Colombia, are true laboratories of experimentation and, in some cases, of innovation in terms of safety and security. Moreover, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), through head-office or in-country teams, could embrace or

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17 The prison system in Brazil is an example of a malfunctioning public security system that has unduly imprisoned 50,000 people. These policies have failed miserably and, besides not contributing to decrease criminal activities, they have also created problems such as overcrowded prisons and human rights violations.
20 Ibid.
foster development projects that are sensitive to violence/conflict, and be oriented towards those groups and sub-groups most affected by it. Another incentive would be to create an annual regional peace prize that could be delivered by the United Nations, World Bank, UNDP or by UNASUR.

Conclusion

The current peace and security structure in South America might be the solution to traditional conflicts, but it also represents an obstacle to effectively building peace in the region. The current approach is necessary, but not sufficient. It needs to be updated and expanded in creative ways, guided by some of the audacious and innovative processes and methods that are found throughout the region, predominantly at the local level. These experiences, when systematically organised and analysed, could help to prevent and reduce violence at national and regional levels, and could be a valuable source of inspiration for other countries in the Global South currently facing similar challenges, such as in Africa.

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Central Asia
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding
Anna Matveeva

Introduction

Throughout the last decade, Central Asia has remained largely stable, albeit with periodic outbreaks of spectacular violence. These have affected the eastern region, the Ferghana Valley, comprised of the states of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Although poor, these countries are not heavily dependent on international assistance, but rely primarily on labour remittances, aid and loans from Russia and China. The price for stability has been strong authoritarian rule, in which the regimes maintain their legitimacy through a combination of performance-based and symbolic means.1 Kyrgyzstan, the only country where the inherited Soviet institutions have been dismantled to give way to democratisation, has been affected by interethnic conflict and social turmoil. It has also experienced two forceful regime changes, as a result of which its neighbours came to regard it as a source of chaos and instability. The situation in the cross-border areas of the Valley has been deteriorating since 2013 when clashes occurred around Sokh enclave (Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan). This was followed by incidents on the Kyrgyz/Tajik border, which in January 2014 escalated into armed hostilities. The first casualties were sustained in July 2014, leading to a sharp deterioration in interstate relations.

The region has been a subject to international peacebuilding since 2001 when the War on Terror was launched in Afghanistan. International non-governmental organisations (NGOs) entered the region in around 2008, but few interventions beyond the community level have been successful due to a lack of established relationships and the inability to navigate through the difficult context and build ties with the national governments. The Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has done better in Kyrgyzstan, both in its ‘Peace Messengers’ peacebuilding programme and in working on border issues.

Recently, the majority of the international community’s attention has been geared towards Afghanistan, a country that faces the region from the south. The withdrawal of the Coalition Troops in 2014 provided the grounds for an apocalyptic scenario of instability spillover into Central Asia, which would

destabilise the entire region. The West feels responsible for first intervening in the country and then abandoning its neighbours to deal with the consequences of the pullout. The Central Asian governments also view this as a key moment when the West’s attention is at its height and gains of security assistance should be capitalised upon. Thus, they present the challenges from Afghanistan at their maximum, knowing that the donors are likely to listen and deliver the desired security assistance. Otherwise, the international spotlight is already moving towards Iraq and Syria.

In the author’s opinion, the situation in Afghanistan is unlikely to affect Central Asia to the point of a destabilisation, because:

- The region is outside of the Taliban’s traditional Pashto belt and the movement has more significant targets within Afghanistan. The Taliban has also evolved into a different political force from that which existed at the onset of the international intervention.
- The northern areas of Afghanistan present no credible military threat to the Taliban nationwide, unlike at the time of Ahmad-Shah Massoud in the 1990s when he could lay a claim to the whole country.
- Central Asian states are more prepared to resist an attack. Border defences have been reinforced, and the capacities of the border troops were beefed up both by Russia and the West. For Tajikistan, the river is a natural obstacle. In the case of a direct danger, the government would not hesitate to blow up the bridges erected with international support.
- In the worst-case scenario, Russia has a military base in Tajikistan and is bound by the Collective Security Treaty Organisation provision to render assistance at the onset of an external intervention.

### Challenges to building peace in Central Asia

**The decay of inherited institutions and the value system that promoted internationalism.** The potential for conflict grows in the Ferghana Valley as states move further away from the shared Soviet past and ideologies of nationhood clash with each other. Escalation and violence inside the region is more probable than a major destabilisation coming from Afghanistan as, while tensions are on the rise, preventative measures lag behind.

**Geopolitics** play an enormous role in Central Asia, with the Great Game replayed as the US/UK, Russia and China are vying for power and influence over the region, often undermining each other’s efforts towards peace and stability. China, as a regional player, has not participated in peacebuilding efforts either through the UN or the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, despite it being in its mandate. There is a lot of speculation on China’s role, but this expectation is arguably misplaced, as Beijing is not interested in peacebuilding due to the high sensitivity of such interventions.

**Justice Agenda.** An unaddressed justice agenda provides grounds for further conflict in Kyrgyzstan. We witness young men from the prosecuted Uzbek minority becoming radicalised, entering jihadi movements and fighting in the Middle East. There will be time when they return home. This is a relatively new phenomenon in Kyrgyzstan that emerged after the 2010 interethic conflict. The ‘peace versus justice’ dilemma is very potent for peacebuilding, but the international community has not yet engaged with it seriously. Yet, if justice issues are left
unattended, many other efforts are in vain. While it is unfeasible that the UN would take officials presiding over the massacre of civilians to The Hague, it is within our power to prevent them from being taken on study tours to learn European democratic practices.

The root causes of conflict. The key conflict issues – some of which led to the 2010 clashes and others that were created by it – remain largely unaddressed. The exclusion of minorities from civilian administration and the security sector has only worsened. Political dialogue between the conflict parties was never attempted. Justice and human rights in the conflict aftermath made little progress. Harassment of the Uzbek minority by security agencies continues unchallenged by UN human rights professionals. The presence of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) helps to keep these issues on the agenda, although its reluctance to tackle them and the weak leadership from the headquarters are problematic. UNOHCHR decided to distance itself from the findings and recommendations of the international Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC), although it would have been a natural body to lead the follow-up. It appears that its staying power in the country has superseded normative considerations.

UN focus. The purpose of the UN presence in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan is unclear. Both are middle-income countries and Kazakhstan is, in fact, a donor. They have problems that could lead to instability, such as Islamist cells and an identity split in Kazakhstan, but the states do not see a role for outsiders in resolving them. Nor are the regimes interested in a reform agenda along the international community’s lines, viewing ‘peacebuilding’ as an unnecessary and potentially dangerous game.

Exclusive international focus on Afghanistan has distracted attention from pressing internal problems. This mood affected the UN, sometimes resulting in the creation of artificial programmes and connections with Afghanistan, for which there is no real demand. Tajikistan is better connected to Afghanistan now than within its own country, although one of the main reasons for the civil war of the 1990s was a hopeless regional split among the Tajik nation. In Kyrgyzstan, the UN works on projects connecting the country with Afghanistan, despite the fact that the countries share no common border.

It’s the bureaucracy, stupid! The UN system is not well suited to conflict prevention because it is very slow. For example, an assessment conducted for the UN in August 2013 identified conflict potential in cross-border areas as considerable and, indeed, in January 2014 armed hostilities broke out. UNDP eventually designed a cross-border regional strategy in February 2014 and by June the proposal was submitted, yet in July the first fatality occurred. The operations will start a year after the initial assessment. Even when the money arrives, undertaking quick impact projects, such as improving markets in cross-border areas to keep the channels of inter-communal interaction open, would perhaps be challenging because UNDP procurement procedures must be followed. This is likely to take time, by which point local people become accustomed to traders from the other side not coming to their markets and cross-border trade enters the illicit domain. Rebuilding relations when they are broken is far more difficult than giving them a chance when they are still warm.

A legacy of past problems. In the past, UN peacebuilding has had three programming challenges. The first was a disconnect between its work with communities and local authorities in conflict-prone areas (e.g. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) and its security sector work (e.g. the Border Management Programme in Central Asia, BOMCA). The second was insufficient conflict- and context- analysis, resulting in an inability to recognise the signals of impending crises. This was reinforced by the then leadership’s lukewarm interest in conflict and peacebuilding issues. The
third was the UN’s rural bias, largely overlooking the role of cities in conflict and peacebuilding. Whereas cities play a key role in conflict gestation, escalation and subsequent resolution, most agencies, such as UNDP and UNICEF, concentrated on the countryside. These problems are being overcome, but their legacy is not entirely over.

**Opportunities for building peace in Central Asia**

Since the countries of the Ferghana Valley have been affected by conflict and instability during their post-independence history, talk of peacebuilding resonates, albeit differently in each case. In Uzbekistan, it is possible to speak in terms of regional conflict, but the internal situation is a taboo. Still, Central Asia is a hard political terrain for the UN to function. Kyrgyzstan is the only free country where the UN has considerable room for manoeuvre; in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, it has to operate within tight parameters imposed by the government.

Three main conflict drivers are the deterioration of interethnic relations reinforced by ideologies of ethnically-based statehood, the establishment of borders and an increased appeal of Islamist movements. The trend in the border areas is towards further segregation, despite border delimitation emerging as a root cause for conflict. Meanwhile, in the past the UN saw the root cause as being the deficiency of basic services. Inter-communal relations in a number of areas are at a boiling point and it would not take much to trigger bloodshed. While it is unlikely that UNDP would be able to significantly influence the spread of religious radicalism, it has assets and opportunities to make a positive difference regarding the former two issues.

The UN is still the best instrument the international community has in Central Asia, exceeding contributions of the regional organisations, bilateral donors and international NGOs in the quality and scope of its efforts. This is explained by the ability of the UN system to work with state institutions, given the strong state-oriented nature of the countries and its extensive operations throughout the region.

Unlike in other contexts, in Central Asia the UN runs many programmes itself. This gives it the buy-in not only of the top echelon, but also of the authorities and communities on the ground. It also gives the UN with insights into the intricacies of the political and security context. That said, the UN agencies are also the objects of spying by the state, and its local staff can be under pressure by the security apparatus to inform.

In the past, the UN’s strategic weakness has been its disconnect from Russia’s presence and influence in the region, resulting in two parallel streams of assistance. This situation has been rectified lately with Russia becoming a UNDP donor and a strategic alignment in political messaging emerging. The UN is seen less and less as a US organisation in the region where suspicion of American intentions is a factor.

The high degree of support for regional programming by the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) who threw their combined weight behind the need for a peacebuilding intervention across border is an opportunity. Such rapport among UN leadership is unusual, as the common attitude towards regional programmes is that of caution – it is easier to work at the national level.

The UN is present in the region in a development rather than peacekeeping or humanitarian capacity. On a positive note, the UN leadership has invested in managing (highly personalised) relationships with the major power-holders. The role of the UN RCs is crucial and much depends
on finding the right person for the job. Thus, while discussing what could be done for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, we have to be mindful of the constraints of an authoritarian state and the personalities of UN officials. The RCs are supported by ‘Peace and Development Advisers’ in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and a regional centre in Istanbul.

Required support for building peace and the role of the UN

Strategic approach to peacebuilding. An Immediate Response Facility of US$3 million was deployed in two phases after the 2010 conflict in Kyrgyzstan. In 2013, the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) entered its second-generation phase. The Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) funding of US$15.1 million for 2.5 years (2014-2016) has been approved with the aim of supporting ‘innovative’ projects. The PRF was an opportunity to venture into the difficult areas where the weight of the UN was essential. The PBF was interpreted as a source of funding to be dispersed by means of an internal grants competition. 24 applications from 17 agencies were received, and an uneasy distribution process followed.

Although drafting concept notes was a positive experience, no strategy was worked out in advance to fit proposals from the UN agencies and the background study was a general overview rather than a baseline and gap analysis. A possible place to start would have been a reflection on the recommendations of the KIC, but this did not happen. The result has been a sum of projects, some better than others, with no underlying strategic concept, an absence of the programme rationale and limited innovation, driven more by UN agencies’ supply of capacities and expertise than by analysis.

Some argued that the role of New York in strategic steering could have been greater, as it had almost withdrawn from the process. The absence of guidelines, as well as the inclusion of all UN agencies irrespective of their mandates, resulted in a very ‘political’ process that has consumed the product. The agencies interpreted the PBF terms of reference as funding guidelines, looking for provisions under which they could enter their projects.

Role of the government. The government has been extensively involved in decision-making. It was not entirely happy with the first PBF allocation because it could not see big results for so much money: ‘These cultural festivals. OK, they sang together – what changed?’ This time it decided that things would be different: about 20 officials participated in the PBF Steering Committee and each expected to benefit their agency. This was another barrier to doing anything controversial and innovative. In some cases, the UN ended up undertaking small-scale field projects similar to those of NGOs.

Coherence. In addition to the UN Country Offices, there is another establishment. The UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy (RCPD) in Ashgabat does not have ‘peacebuilding’ in its mandate, but applies ‘preventive’ in relation to diplomacy, development and UN activities. The problem is that the Centre is in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, one of the most closed and authoritarian states on the planet, which adheres to strict ‘neutrality,’ meaning minimal relations with its neighbours. Initiatives emanating from Ashgabat are not taken very seriously by Central Asian leaders, who feel that if the UN meant business, it would have

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2 For instance, some heads of agencies who did not obtain grants are not on speaking terms with the members of the grants’ committee six months after the distribution.

3 Author’s interview with a representative of Presidential Administration, Bishkek, November 2013.
deployed a regional centre either closer to the main theatre of action (Ferghana Valley) or at a regional hub, such as Almaty in Kazakhstan. Ashgabat has few direct flights (only to two other states), while travelling over land borders is virtually impossible. Moreover, it is difficult to persuade highly qualified people to be posted to Ashgabat. Sensitive political dealings typically bypass the UN RCPD in favour of the country officers. Key support would be a relocation of the regional political office to a more appropriate place.

The UN needs to be on alert to avoid overlooking potential conflicts, but its perspective has been more reactive than proactive and forward-looking. In the past, its operations sometimes equated ‘peacebuilding’ with conflict-sensitive development projects, which is not enough. The focus on a government’s buy-in can turn into an obstacle to addressing the root causes of conflict and developing better programming. In general – and this applies to all international interveners – peacebuilding that is meant to address internal problems is often based on a wrong premise of avoiding politics and controversy, working around the conflict, and on a rather vague notion that development brings peace somehow. Regional and cross-border tensions would perhaps be the arena where the UN is more prepared to take a decisive stance and include security and politics into its peacebuilding agenda.

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Northeast Asia
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Sachio Nakato

Introduction

This paper analyses challenges and opportunities for building peace in Northeast Asia. The paper begins by identifying the current challenges for peacebuilding in Northeast Asia, especially focusing on the security concerns of China, South Korea, North Korea and Japan. Next, it investigates the key opportunities for building peace in the region. Here, the possibilities for developing regional economic cooperation as well as for creating effective multilateral security frameworks in Northeast Asia and recent sub-national trends will be discussed. Then, it explores the key elements for maintaining peace and stability in Northeast Asia. In this section, the roles of the United States (US) and the United Nations (UN) in Northeast Asia will be discussed.

Challenges to building peace in Northeast Asia

There are growing concerns in the international community regarding the tensions that have emerged over the past few years among the countries of Northeast Asia. Major challenges for building peace in the region are mainly related to inter-state or traditional national security issues. There are at least three possible reasons for the increasing tensions.

North Korean Nuclear Issue. The North Korean nuclear issue and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs have comprised what is considered by many to be the most serious challenge for building peace in Northeast Asia. Under the Kim Jong Un regime, North Korea has now claimed itself as a nuclear state in its constitution. North Korea actually launched a ‘satellite’ in December 2012 and conducted the third nuclear test in February 2014. North Korean nuclear and missile launches certainly pose a major international security threat in Northeast Asia. Neighbouring countries, such as Japan and South Korea, are seriously concerned about North Korea’s nuclear weapons. The US is also concerned that North Korea has proliferated nuclear and missile technologies and goods. Even China is opposed to the nuclear tests and has pressured North Korea regarding its nuclear programs.
**Territorial Disputes.** Territorial disputes pose serious security concerns in the region. One of the most conspicuous tensions is the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands issue. China, Taiwan and Japan have claimed sovereignty over the small group of islets and tensions among the three parties have periodically erupted. The most recent severe tensions began when the then Tokyo governor, Shintaro Ishihara, announced his plan to purchase three of the eight islets in April 2002. While the Japanese government allegedly purchased the three islets to prevent the Tokyo governor’s attempt, China and Taiwan opposed the purchase. Moreover, in China large-scale anti-Japan demonstrations spread across the country. In response to Japan’s move, China deployed patrol ships near the islands and military surveillance planes in Japanese airspace, claiming that they are ‘Chinese’ territories.

Many analysts are concerned that armed conflict between Japan and China might occur over the islands. Tensions among the US, China and Japan rose when China declared a new Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) across the East China Sea on 23 November 2013.1 The US Defence Secretary, Chuck Hagel, stated that ‘we view this development as a destabilising attempt to alter the status quo in the region’. He further reaffirmed that the Chinese announcement ‘will not in any way change how the United States military operates in the region’. On the other hand, China rebutted the US statement and warned that ‘the US should not take sides in the dispute between China and Japan’ and demanded that ‘it make concrete efforts for the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region’. In this sense, managing military conflicts among the US, China, and Japan would be the biggest challenge for building peace and stability in the region.

Another territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea also has posed additional challenges for building peace and developing cooperation in Northeast Asia. Both Japan and South Korea have claimed the small islands in the Sea of Japan/East Sea. Japan has claimed that it had incorporated the tiny uninhabited island named Takeshima or Dokudo into Japanese territory in 1905. On the other hand, South Korea claimed sovereignty over the Takeshima/Dokudo Islands in January 1952 basing its claim on historical documents, as well as the exclusion of the disputed islands from Japanese territory by Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP).

Recent tensions arose when then South Korean President Lee Myung Bak visited the Takeshima/Dokudo Islands in August 2012. In response to the move, the Japanese government hinted that it would bring the issue of the Takeshima/ Dokudo dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Japanese government has before proposed to bring the territorial issue to the ICJ in 1954 and 1962. However, both proposals were rejected by South Korea as it controlled the islands and maintains the position that there is no territorial dispute.

It seems unlikely that South Korea and Japan – both allies of US – will engage in actual military conflict over the islands; however, the Takeshima/Dokudo problem has continued to be an obstacle for the development of bilateral relations and for Northeast Asia as a whole. According to a joint public survey in 2012, most Japanese (83.7%) and Korean (94.6%) respondents considered the Takeshima/Dokdo dispute as a significant obstacle to better relations.2

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2 The Genron NPO and East Asia Institute, the *1st Japan-South Korea Public Opinion Poll*, May, 2013, p. 17.
Increased Military Role of Japan. Japanese ‘militarization’ could be considered another source of confrontation in Northeast Asia, at least from the perspectives of China, South Korea and North Korea. The Cabinet of Japan adopted a new National Security Strategy (NSS) in December 2012, which articulates Japan’s foreign and national security policy for the next ten years. The NSS conceptualised the policy as ‘Proactive Pacifism’ based on the principle of international cooperation. The Abe administration has explored ways of changing the interpretation of Article 9 of the constitution in order to exercise the right of collective self-defense.

Along with issues stemming from differences in the perception of history, Japan’s increased security role has created security concerns in Northeast Asia, especially in China and South Korea. South Korea and China have warned that such a move by Japan along with ‘wrong’ historical perceptions together would destabilise regional peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Such an attempt to reform the security policy in Japan has been interpreted to mean that, since the early 1990s, Japan has been hoping to become a ‘normal country’ regarding its international contribution, especially after the Gulf War crisis. However, the idea of becoming a ‘normal country’ is widely understood outside Japan to mean that Japan will awaken its nationalism through the return of using a traditionally interpreted point of view for its military. Japan’s effort to make Japan a ‘normal country’, therefore, and the adoption of the NSS are considered as an obvious attempt to militarise Japan, both in China and South Korea.

Opportunities for building peace in Northeast Asia

Northeast Asian Paradox. While political-security relations in Northeast Asia are currently at a low point, economic interdependence has been deepening. The South Korean President, Park Geun Hye, has on occasion referred to the current situation as a ‘Northeast Asian paradox’. The concept characterises the nature of the security and economic environment in the region: political and security relations do not move in tandem with economic interdependence. Although President Park places emphasis on resolving the political-security related difficulties by proposing ‘Northeast Asian Peace and Cooperation Initiatives’, economic interdependence has certainly provided common economic interests and created room for cooperation and integration in the region.

Free Trade Agreement negotiations among China, South Korea and Japan. It is remarkable that China, South Korea, and Japan agreed to proceed with negotiations for a trilateral free trade agreement (FTA) in November 2012 despite territorial disputes between Japan and China, as well as Japan and South Korea, and worsening political relations among them. China, South Korea and Japan appear to have put aside their political and security disputes in order to obtain economic benefits.

The trilateral FTA could bring an enormous economic impact worldwide, as well as significant economic benefits for China, South Korea and Japan. If the agreement goes ahead, one study estimates that the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of China, South Korea, and Japan would reach 20 per cent of the world GDP and their combined trade volumes would account for 17.5 per cent of global trade. Needless to say, the three countries have to resolve political and economic difficulties in order to for an agreement to be reached. However, they are fully

3 Y. Soeya et al., Futsu no Kuni Nihon (Japan as a ‘Normal Country’?), Chikura Shobo, 2014, pp. 3-4.
4 S. Tiezzi, “China-Japan-South Korea Hold FTA Talks Despite Political Tensions,” The Diplomat, March 5, 2014.
aware that economic interdependence and integration would bring huge economic benefits to all, despite existing tensions.

Although economic interdependence and integration do not guarantee peace, they certainly contribute to building peace. Each participating country hopes to enjoy economic benefits through the increased trade in the region and would avoid destroying such opportunities through igniting armed conflict in the region.

**Multilateral Security Framework.** Various efforts to establish multilateral security framework are gradually expanding in Asia. These include the East Asian Summit (EAS), IISS Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) Plus, Six Party Talks and Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO). In comparison to in Europe, where multilateral security frameworks such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) have played an important role in security issues (including in peacebuilding, crisis management and conflict prevention), comprehensive multilateral security frameworks have not been fully developed in Northeast Asia. While multilateral security frameworks have developed in the Asia Pacific region, they still remain in the confidence-building stage and do not function as security cooperation in areas such as conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy and crisis management.5

ASEAN has played an important role in multilateral security frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region through promoting dialogue and cooperation in various traditional and non-traditional security issues. ASEAN has been the driving force of multilateral security frameworks in the Asia pacific region, including the ARF, ADMM and EAS. It is notable that the ADMM-Plus Initiatives offers a framework in addressing a wide range of regional security issues. At the first ADMM-Plus Initiatives in 2010, five Experts’ Working Groups (EWGs) established five non-traditional security areas to address security issues common to member countries: humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR); maritime security; counter-terrorism; military medicine; and peacekeeping operations. The ADMM-Plus successfully conducted the first HA/DR and military medicine exercise in Brunei Darussalam in June 2013 and has developed a platform for military-to-military cooperation in more than one of the many forums.

On the other hand, a comprehensive multilateral security framework specifically addressing security issues in Northeast Asia has not yet been developed. In this sense, the Six Party Talks Framework has been the only multilateral security framework in which countries in Northeast Asia, including the US, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and North Korea, discuss together the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula. Some analysts have therefore advocated the possibility of creating a multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia through developing the Six Party talks. However, the Six Party Talks have not occurred since December 2008. Moreover, the Six Party Talks Framework has focused solely on the North Korean nuclear issue. It therefore has limited capacity and utility in terms of creating a security mechanism to deal with traditional and non-traditional security issues in the region beyond North Korea.

**Sub-National Trends and Future Possibilities for Peacebuilding.** While formal institutionalisation of regional cooperation is less developed in Northeast Asia, business groups and government-affiliated think tanks have played an important role in creating regional networks that connect countries and sub-national actors in the region. The business groups in respective countries support a FTA among China, South Korea and Japan in Northeast Asia. Also, the economic impact of the China-South Korea-Japan trilateral FTA has been studied and supported through

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joint research conducted by government-affiliated think tanks in each country. In this sense, non-state actors in business, as well as policy think tanks, are closely related, and cooperation in Northeast Asia is often promoted by these non-state actors along with state guidance.

In addition, transnational social networks in Northeast Asia may have great potential for peacebuilding in the region. The role of Korean networks in Northeast Asia is especially prominent. Globalisation and regionalism in Asia also provide opportunity for Koreans to form various global networks. A notable example is the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST), an international university in North Korea that has been established and supported by Koreans living abroad in Northeast Asia. The PUST has been regarded as a contribution to economic development in North Korea, as well as the Korean unification process, that could contribute to peacebuilding in the region. Needless to say, inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation at the sub-national level should be considered as important stepping stones toward peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and for future unification. For example, the Kaesong Industrial Complex is a symbol of inter-Korean economic cooperation and has operated for a decade despite occasional severe tensions between the two Koreas.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

In Northeast Asia where traditional national security issues are predominant, the role of the US is key for peacebuilding purposes.

**US Engagement to Northeast Asia.** US engagement and commitment to Northeast Asia is one of the most important factors in managing territorial disputes between China and Japan. During the summit meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in April 2014, President Obama made it clear that the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands are subject to Article 5 of the US-Japan Security Treaty. Article 5 of the Treaty stipulates that the US is supposed to protect “the territories under the administration of Japan” and that the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands are administered by Japan. While the US commitment clearly expressed by President Obama irritated China, this statement contributes to stability in the region in the following two aspects. Firstly, Obama’s statement assured that the US would engage in the event of a conflict over the Islands in the East China Sea, which would deter China from military action. Secondly, the statement also removed concerns or fears that Japan might be abandoned by the US in the case of a conflict with China. Japan has no need, therefore, for building up military facilities on the Islands, which might provoke China.

**A New Model of Great Powers between the US and China.** When it comes to the rise of China, the US has also explored the possibility of constructing a ‘new model’ of Great Power relations with China. This new model has been discussed by Chinese and American officials since February 2012 when the then Vice-President Xi Jinping visited the US.

There are certainly elements of competition and cooperation in US-China relations. On the one hand, the US and China have many shared interests and policy objectives regarding global issues, such as a sluggish global economy, the environmental and energy, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as non-traditional security issues, such as terrorism and transnational crimes. On the other hand, the two great powers also have issues of tension or competition, including trade imbalance, human rights, the South China Sea issues and the increase of China’s military expenditures. The new model of Great Power relations, therefore,

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6 For more detailed analysis on US role with regard to Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands disputes, see M. E. Manyin, CRS Report for Congress Senkaku (Diaoyu/Diaoyutai) Islands Dispute: US Treaty Obligations, January 22, 2013.
aims at preventing inevitable conflict and competition, while promoting deeper cooperation between the US and China. Both countries certainly recognise that cooperation rather than confrontation should be the dominant element of the new model; peacebuilding in Northeast Asia therefore depends on how the US and China manage the potential threats between them.

**US-North Korea Relations.** The role of the US would also be a key issue regarding North Korean nuclear and missile issues. While North Korea has to date twice conducted nuclear tests during the Obama administration, the US has maintained a policy of ‘strategic patience’, deterring aggressive behaviour from North Korean and protecting its allies, while encouraging North Korea to change its course of provocations, including nuclear and missile development programs. The US and South Korea have clearly expressed that they will not engage in negotiations with North Korea until it shows positive moves towards denuclearisation.

Nonetheless, North Korea is unlikely to move forward toward denuclearisation and continues to develop its nuclear and missile programs. From the North Korean perspective, ‘hostile’ US policy created a nuclear North Korea and, therefore, it is unlikely that North Korea will move first unless it obtains certain guarantees for its security from the US. Overall, the North Korean nuclear and missile issues would be strongly determined by the development of US-North Korean relations.

**US-Japan Security Alliance.** Finally, on the question of Japanese ‘militarisation’, it should be noted that Japan’s increased military role cannot go beyond the scope of the US-Japan Security Alliance Framework. Interestingly, whenever the North Korean nuclear issue becomes a matter of focus in the international community, the question of a nuclear Japan is often discussed outside Japan. This line of argument over a nuclear Japan reflects concerns over Japanese militarisation. However, as long as the US-Japan Security Alliance functions and the US’ commitment to protect Japan is assured, it is unlikely that Japan will go nuclear. Indeed, it would not be possible for Japan to go nuclear, as the US would never allow a move in that direction. Japan’s ‘Proactive Pacifism’ is promoted based on the principle of international cooperation and within the framework of the US-Japan Security Alliance.

**The Role of the UN.** Although traditional inter-state relations are critical in Northeast Asia, the UN can still play an important role in supporting peacebuilding in the region. Firstly, the UN can facilitate economic and social development, which lead to social stability and contribute to peacebuilding. For example, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: East and North-East Asia Office (ESCAP-ENEA) has promoted multilateral partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation for sustainable development and integration in the region. Secondly, the UN can offer an opportunity to express alternative views and provide norms for peacebuilding. For example, the report of the UN Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters made a recommendation that ‘the Secretary-General [should] consider appropriate action for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in North-East Asia’. Various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from Northeast Asian countries convened a forum at the UN headquarters and urged discussion of the possibility for creating a nuclear-free zone in Northeast Asia. While these efforts have a limited impact on inter-state conflicts among Great Powers, the UN can certainly play a role in facilitating cooperation by offering a venue for meeting and discussing common security concerns, promoting conflict prevention among countries and providing norms for peace in Northeast Asia.

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Conclusion: A shifting power balance

While challenges and opportunities for peace and stability in Northeast Asia are analysed, it should be noted that a shift in the power balance in Northeast Asia is an underlying cause for creating security concerns in the region. The rise of China is a most prominent issue in this respect and has influenced the strategic thinking of every country in the region. The US’ rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific Region also reflects a strategic adjustment in the Obama Administration’s foreign policy. Japan’s new security strategy is also considered as a strategic response to the new security environment. Needless to say, China is also exploring the possibilities of avoiding military conflict with the US and pursues cooperative relations between the existing and emerging Great Powers by proposing a ‘new model’ of great power relations with the US. If the countries and non-state actors in Northeast Asia can work together to handle the potential conflicts and move forward to strengthen mutually beneficial relations, there would be multiple opportunities for building peace in Northeast Asia. Needless to say, this would be highly desirable for all countries and peoples in the region.

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About this Paper: This paper is part of a series providing regional peacebuilding perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The authors’ task was to provide an authentic, original and honest analysis about three questions: (1) What are the main challenges for building peace in your region? (2) What are the key opportunities for building peace in your region over the next one or two years? (3) What would be the key support necessary to build peace in your region over the next one or two years? Is there any specific role for the UN?

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About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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Southeast Asia
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding
Ed Garcia

Introduction

Covering some eleven countries with an estimated total population of 618 million people stretching across an area of 4,500,000 square kilometres, Southeast Asia represents a region with enormous peacebuilding challenges and opportunities. More than two thirds of the people in the region live in countries that have either experienced armed conflicts or are living through periods of transition towards less conflictive and more participative societies thanks to peace agreements that have been forged or peace processes currently in progress. However, a few of these peace negotiations are undergoing a painstaking period of review, if not reversal. Moreover, momentous developments in the regional aggregation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), are underway that in the next two years could help provide a climate more conducive to the peaceful resolution of conflicts among and within the countries in the region. It is perhaps in this area where the mandate, the expertise and the support of the United Nations (UN), its allied agencies and partners could be most valuable and could have the most long-lasting impact, while at the same time contributing to the efforts to make and build peace in the countries confronting violent conflict in the region.

By 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will be put in place providing enormous possibilities for addressing some of the underlying causes of conflict in the region, in particular the opportunity to deal with questions of economic inclusion and inequality. The ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) could likewise provide a more regular and effective venue for constructive dialogue and the meeting of minds on critical issues – once again providing the opportunity for employing a ‘peace lens’ in understanding the more contentious situations in the region.

The establishment of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation launched at the 21st ASEAN Summit in 2012 has been envisioned to provide support for conflict management and resolution so as to contribute towards the

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:
attainment of peace, security and stability in the region. Finally, the progress made in forming an inter-governmental regional human rights body and the drafting of an ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, though modest, are nevertheless landmark achievements for an aggrupation that has been somewhat rather reticent in the combat against regimes of impunity that undermine the rule of law.

In brief, over the next two years in Southeast Asia, the possibilities of creating institutional support for efforts to make and build peace exist, given adequate and timely support from intergovernmental organisations, principally the UN with its rich experience and the work of its allied agencies on the ground, as well as civil society organisations, both international and local.

**Challenges to building peace in Southeast Asia**

The annual analysis published by the Escola de Pau (School of Peace) at the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona and the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme of Uppsala University covering armed conflicts with specified battle-related deaths in the recent period up until the present have regularly included references to a number of countries in the region, namely, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Burma. In the distant past, major violent conflicts had taken place in mainland Southeast Asia, namely, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Before focusing on the particular situations of violent conflict in each country, it is helpful to reiterate a number of observations that may have an impact on the understanding of the peacebuilding challenges in the region:

**The protracted nature of violent conflicts in the region.** Contemporary studies on armed conflicts in Southeast Asia have focused on the protracted nature of the conflicts, their underlying causes and the fact that the armed conflicts in the region are equally characterised by the subnational dimension of the conflict.\(^1\) Poverty and inequality, landlessness and livelihood insecurity, a political economy of exclusion, the question of identity and the respect for diverse cultures have figured prominently among the factors that have fuelled conflicts in the region. In this context, it is therefore important to reframe the pursuit of a negotiated political settlement – re-focusing on approaches that are more comprehensive, inter-related and country-specific, while sensitive to the sub-national dimensions of the conflicts in the region. In this manner, there will be a greater chance of pursuing more sustainable paths to peace.

**The subnational character of regional conflicts.** In general, the contours of conflict in the region are primarily subnational in character, for example Mindanao in the southern Philippines, the Patani insurgency in Southern Thailand, the processes in Aceh and West Papua in Indonesia and the Myanmar Border Areas including the Rohingya Muslim minorities in the state of Rakhine, among others. Even the armed struggle waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines have sub-regional expressions in the Compostela Valley in Mindanao, the Leyte and Samar provinces in Eastern Visayas, the Bicol and the Southern and Central Tagalog regions – areas that have high indices of poverty, as well as high levels of inequality and more pronounced levels of violence. The subnational perspective thus for a large part provides a more realistic lens in addressing a good number of the more intractable conflicts confronted by peace advocates working on Southeast Asia.

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\(^1\) Asia Foundation, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict*, 2013. The research publication deals with subnational conflicts identified as the most enduring form of violent conflict in Asia.
Linking the subnational, national and regional approaches in pursuing relevant roadmaps to peace. In light of this, it is important to analyse the sub-regional causes of conflict and to explore ways in which a more inclusive development path may be pursued in the economic and political terrains. To this end, improved methods of designing, pursuing and implementing more relevant roadmaps to peace can be considered. Understanding the sub-national character of the conflicts can thus underpin the search for national approaches and solutions. Moreover, as the Southeast region approaches another stage in the development of the ASEAN into the ASEAN Economic Community in the coming year, as well as the ASEAN Political and Security Community, it is important to consider the impact on the imbalances among the countries in the region and between their different sub-regions.

The challenge of resolute peace-related leadership and addressing people’s aspirations. Undoubtedly, the resolve of political leaders in the countries in the region is critical in the realisation of a just peace in areas of conflict. A particular challenge in the region is how to create greater coherence between resolute peace-related leadership that is able to meet the people’s aspirations to improve their lives, to better protect their basic rights and to participate more meaningfully in the formulation and implementation of policies. To consolidate gains made around the peace table, it is vital that political leaders in countries emerging from violent conflict are able to establish durable institutions, encourage more effective practices in governance and put on track sustainable economic development that will meet the needs of the most vulnerable in hitherto divided societies.

Three major thematic peace-related challenges that deal with the critical stages of peace processes in Southeast Asia can be identified:

- **Implementing peace agreements.** Two important peace agreements signed within the last decade have been forged in the Southeast Asian region, namely, the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding in Aceh and the more recent March 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro in Mindanao. It is a truism to say that the period after the signing of an agreement is the most difficult part. Implementing the provisions of the agreements, ensuring that enabling legislation is passed and that the parties to the accord comply with the spirit and letter of the accord are the imperatives in this period. In what way can the guarantors of these agreements be assisted to ensure that compliance is prompt and comprehensive? Can a peace constituency not only in the regions affected by the conflict but throughout the country be mobilised so that the people remain vigilant and put pressure on the conflict parties to abide by responsibilities that they have acquired by signing-up to the peace accords? Civil society peace advocates can further efforts to improve good governance, the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable in society, the greater involvement of peasants, workers, fisherfolk and the urban poor, among others, and the protection of the environment to meet the challenges of climate change, which is most acute in the Southeast Asian region.

- **Accompanying processes of peace negotiations.** In processes where peace negotiations are either ongoing or stalled, such as those between the Philippine Government and the National Democratic Front (negotiating on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People’s Army), can the principal facilitators, such as the Norwegian envoys, be assisted directly or indirectly by friends of the process — whether governmental, inter-governmental or non-governmental, national, local or international — so as to break the current impasse? The juncture in Southern Thailand as well as in West Papua in Indonesia present similar challenges of reconvening conflicting parties to enter more
seriously into negotiations that can be owned by local actors so that their negotiated outcomes can be truly trusted.

- **Assisting efforts towards more participative democratic transitions.** In those situations working towards a period of democratic transition, it may be important to highlight the challenges that a more inclusive and participative approach can bring. Dealing with the multi-faceted conflicts on the borders of Myanmar can be enhanced if the transition to democracy is more fully realised. The same is true for dealing with the conflicts in southern Thailand, which could be pursued more vigorously if the stand-off between the opposing political forces in the capital and in other parts of the country is resolved by more parliamentary and less contentious means that carry the risk of pushing the country to the brink of political breakdown. The elections in Indonesia provide another opening for dealing with greater restraint and magnanimity regarding the other conflicts in the more outlying parts of the vast country. Once a more authentic and participative democratic culture is installed in countries confronting violent conflicts, then the conditions become more conducive for meeting major challenges with greater confidence and with more chance of success.

### Opportunities for building peace in Southeast Asia

In identifying key opportunities for building peace in Southeast Asia in the next two years, it might be helpful to take an individual country approach and a long-term regional approach.

**The Philippines: Bangsamoro and the Communist Challenge.** The most important opportunity that presents itself in the country and wider region is perhaps how to consolidate the gains embodied in the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro.\(^2\) It has four annexes: the first, on power-sharing; the second, on wealth-sharing; the third, on normalisation, which includes decommissioning as well as the redeployment of forces; and the fourth, on the transitional arrangements and institutions leading up to the 2016 elections. If the agreement holds and the provisions are implemented according to the spirit and letter of the accord, then it would provide an important example as well as a template to other conflict parties in similar situations in the region seeking peaceful outcomes.

Given the context of recurring humanitarian disasters in the country and the momentum for peace which the Mindanao Accord provides, perhaps there can now be an opportunity for breaking the prolonged stalemate which has resulted in a standstill in the Norwegian-brokered peace negotiations between the Philippine Government and the National Democratic Front. But the ground has to be prepared and the process anchored on four distinct fronts: human rights, socio-economic reforms and policy directions, electoral and political reforms, and harnessing broader support for the process that could subsequently result in the reduction and elimination of protracted violence in the country.

**Indonesia: Aceh and the period of political transition.** The experience of forging the Memorandum of Understanding of 2005 and the subsequent largely peaceful alternance in political power in the hitherto divided Aech region has given Indonesia sufficient confidence in

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\(^2\) For a full copy of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro and its four annexes, please see the website of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Processes (OPAPP) for the Philippines: [www.opapp.gov.ph](http://www.opapp.gov.ph).
consolidating the gains of the historic agreement. The question of ‘political infighting’ among the political forces in contention in the area and the recurrent clamour on behalf of provinces outside of Banda Aceh and the central region to seek a ‘separate status’ so to speak, have constituted sources of tension. Nevertheless, the agreement has provided the necessary resolve and space to consider ways in which to pursue relevant peace efforts in other parts of the country, such as West Papua/Papua, which has previously undergone periods of relative and sporadic violence.

**Thailand: the southern question.** The contentious issue of national political leadership that has seen contending forces and their respective following play out their differences on the streets of the capital and outlying areas has resulted in political gridlock and the inability to focus on addressing the unresolved issues in the southernmost part of the country. Although there have been tentative efforts in the recent past, it is worth noting the determination of voices on the ground to advance their aspirations to break the vicious cycles of the past. It is important to identify examples of key citizen peace initiatives and explore ways in which support can be provided for efforts that emerge from the ground, such as the following: the Southern Thailand Peace Dialogues; the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand, composed of some twenty civil society organisations that explore proposals towards political decentralisation; the so-called ‘Patani Peace Process’, with their ground-breaking efforts in convening an ‘insiders’ peacebuilders’ platform’ joined by some fifty influential individuals whose credibility has inspired respect; and, the Patani People’s Peace Forum, which has focused on work to draft the possible contents of a peace agenda.³

**Myanmar/Burma: democratic transition and border areas.** There have been dramatic political changes in the country, resulting in a rare ‘democratic’ opening, which, though limited, is unprecedented in this land-locked country. The release of political opposition figures, including the engagement of Aung San Suu Kyi in parliament itself, has led to marked changes that were hitherto unheard of in the country. Ceasefire arrangements sealed with various forces representing ethnic constituents within the country’s borders have to a large extent been honoured. However, violence has been inflicted on the Rohingya Muslim minorities in the state of Rakhine who, besides expressing a different belief, have not been adequately recognised and have to a large extent been excluded from the benefits of democratic openings that the country has enjoyed in the recent past.

**The Regional Approach: Support for the ASEAN initiatives.** The coming two years may be critical for ASEAN’s historic resolve to forge an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), as well as an ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC), including an ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). With such promising initiatives scheduled for the coming year, the opportunity for building peace in the region is further enhanced, provided governments and non-state actors, as well as civil society peace advocates, are able to avail of such instruments, recognising their possibilities as well as their limitations.

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Required support for building peace and the role of the UN

In general, there seems to be a number of critical roles that the UN, its allied agencies and its partner organisations can play in Southeast Asia in the coming two years. The following strands provide the most promise given the current regional context and the ‘niche strengths’ of the UN and its allied agencies and partners, including civil society peace advocates:

**Human rights and humanitarian principles.** Ensuring compliance with human rights standards and humanitarian principles; designating human rights rapporteurs or experts in particular peace processes, such as those in the Philippines between the Government and the National Democratic Front (NDF), in Southern Thailand, in Indonesia and in Myanmar may largely contribute to creating conditions more conducive to peacebuilding. In the case of the Philippines, a vigorous consortium of human rights monitors provides support for better compliance with human rights standards and the creation of a critical peace constituency. The historic contributions of organisations such as the Task Force Detainees, the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates and Karapatan, among others, provide testimony to the valuable role played by civil society organisations in advancing efforts towards a rights-based peace.

**Human security and security sector reform.** In the countries mentioned, but particularly in Southern Thailand and Myanmar, linking human security to security sector reform, including civilian oversight over the military, is a priority. Allied with the efforts to further advance in the compliance with the UN Millennium Development Goals, it is imperative to link peacebuilding with efforts to reach verifiable targets that will benefit people’s lives, while placing the safety and security of people as a priority concern of all stakeholders in the respective conflict countries and the Southeast Asian region at large. The efforts of the Mindanao People’s Caucus and an alliance of people’s organisations in the southern Philippine regions have led to the protection of the rights of internally-displaced peoples in initiatives such as ‘Bakwit’ (dealing with the rights of displaced peoples), the zones and sanctuaries of peace, and citizens initiatives towards timely and meaningful ceasefires. Other examples are measures to empower women and their efforts to better care for the health and educational needs of their children to advance human security to benefit the next generation.

**Democratic transition and building capacities.** To support processes of democratic transition, capacity-building in ‘good governance’ for local leaders in the aftermath of the Bangsamoro Peace Agreement forged in Mindanao and the continuing process of democratization in Aceh in the aftermath of the earlier Memorandum of Understanding are both imperative measures to ensure that the gains made are irreversible. Moreover, to ensure that sufficient resources and expertise are made available by the UN for the political leaders managing these periods of transition, as well as to ensure that civil society organisations remain vigilant and have the capacity to monitor efforts.

**Conclusion: No turning back**

To ensure that the peace processes are supported, that peace advocates are strengthened and that the peace agreements so far forged are irreversible as far as possible, it is worthwhile considering three related themes.

**Building peace constituencies.** There can be no sustainable peace in the above-mentioned conflict situations and countries concerned without building a solid peace constituency that could advance the peace agenda in the country in season and out of season. Peace
processes have their ups and downs, moments of opportunities and downturns. No government
is monolithic, and to strengthen the more peace-inclined leaders in the country, it is imperative
to ensure that pressure is applied constantly and consistently to advance the process, to
consolidate the peace gains so far achieved and to realise the peace dividends that most
agreements bring.

**Seeking regional collaboration and the relevance of Islamic diplomacy.** In the case of
Southeast Asia, regional collaboration is most timely given the momentum of developments
within ASEAN and the region. It is worth noting that the role played by Islamic diplomacy has
been critical, not to say indispensable, particularly in the case of Mindanao in the southern
Philippines. This could similarly hold relevance in southern Thailand, as well as in Indonesia. The
role of the UN as a friend of the process, as well as moral guarantor, can likewise be explored.

**Supporting local Initiatives with UN capacities, expertise and linkages.** The groundswell of
support from local peoples and the increasing interest demonstrated by regional bodies seem to
provide a welcome opportunity for the UN to provide capacities, expertise and linkages when
requested, particularly through its allied agencies such as UNDP, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF,
UNIFEM and the Mediation Support Unit under the UN Secretary-General’s Political Affairs
Department.

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**About the author:** Ed Garcia is an independent peace consultant. He has worked in diverse regions of conflict
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Europe
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Catherine Woollard

Introduction

The 2014 Global Peace Index ranks Europe as the world’s most peaceful region. But despite this ranking, Europe is not devoid of conflict and risks to peace. From Europe’s fragile peace processes to ‘frozen conflicts’, from the role of the European Union (EU) to the active peacebuilding role of European actors (both governmental and non-governmental) outside Europe, there are challenges and opportunities to consider that are in or emanating from this continent. The current crisis in Ukraine has brought the need for peacebuilding closer to the heart of Europe. The paper also highlights that the extent to which Europe-based actors are affecting the dynamics of conflicts outside Europe should also be a greater concern for peacebuilders.

Challenges to building peace in Europe

Fragile Peace Processes. Post-conflict transitions are underway in several regions of Europe, including the Western Balkans, Northern Ireland and arguably the Basque region of Spain, as well as with respect to the conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish population of Turkey. In these regions, multi-faceted peacebuilding efforts involve local and international actors. Despite positive developments, and even the dissemination of ‘lessons’ and ‘good practice’, peacebuilders warn against complacency and emphasise the remaining challenges, including reconciliation, justice and institutional reform. Recent reminders of these challenges include the conflicts over displaying flags in Northern Ireland, 2012-2013, and protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2013. Key challenges for peacebuilding in Europe include the risks of institutionalisation of conflict dynamics in power-sharing arrangements and the competition, inefficiencies and resentment generated by the presence of many international organisations.

‘Frozen conflicts’. ‘Frozen conflicts’ are situations where there are unresolved issues related to past violent conflict, especially with respect to contested borders and often involving breakaway entities. Many of these conflicts remain in a state of suspended animation, with little progress in tackling the causes of
conflict (such as identity questions or the absence of minority rights) or in managing its immediate manifestations (such as border disputes). Cases include conflicts over Moldova and Transnistria, Cyprus and Northern Cyprus, Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia.

Many peacebuilders do not like the label ‘frozen conflict’ in part because, although these are situations where violence is contained, there is a risk that it re-emerges. Peacebuilding initiatives continue in these areas, often focusing on confidence-building measures to facilitate dialogue and contact among affected communities and conflict parties.

Conflicts related to independence and autonomy. There are risks of violence where separatists seeking independence or greater autonomy and rights have used violence or have been met with violence by states. There are also separatist conflicts in European countries that have been managed non-violently, including in Belgium, the United Kingdom (UK) and the recent stages of Kosovo’s independence. Increasingly complex constitutional settlements are being negotiated to prevent the break-up of nations.

The crisis in Ukraine. The unfolding crisis in Ukraine is the most obvious current challenge in Europe. A key concern for peacebuilders is developing peaceful responses to the crisis in the short-term – and peaceful responses that abide by peacebuilding principles, e.g. supporting local actors to resolve their own conflicts – and then advocating for these peaceful responses to be adopted. It is also imperative to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict, be they poor governance, identity clashes or the geostrategic competition of external actors. Finally, there is a challenge related to interpretations of the crisis, as those arguing for increases in military spending in Europe are using the crisis to argue their case; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s (NATO) Secretary-General, for example, has repeatedly argued that defence cuts in Europe were a cause of the crisis.

In addition, the crises highlight Europe’s responsibility for exacerbating conflict risks, including the need to explore complicity in poor governance and corruption, for conflict sensitivity in trade relations, and to integrate peacebuilding into the EU’s approach to neighbouring countries.

The EU as a peace process. One of the reasons for the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) was to promote peace in Europe following a series of devastating wars. The EU is thus in part a peace project – or more properly an ongoing peace process, at the heart of which is conflict transformation through economic and cultural integration. Recent challenges to the EU and a lack of popular support for it could undermine peace in Europe. Criticism of the EU is caused in part by the financial crisis and is linked to wider disillusionment with political leadership. Inequality and dissatisfaction have led to social unrest in Europe, but that has tended to remain peaceful, taking the form of large demonstrations and strikes across the continent.

Nationalism and a crisis of political legitimacy in Europe. Extremist nationalist forces in Europe have risen in prominence and, in some countries, in popularity in the last twenty years. They generate social tensions and violence either directly or through incitement of racial hatred. These parties and movements have certain differences; however, there is a common core to all – anti-immigration and anti-EU policies. They remain a minority, albeit a visible and troubling one. These movements should be seen as part of a wider crisis of political legitimacy in Europe. There is a widespread lack of public support for and public approval of political parties, individual politicians and political leaders.
Building peace in Europe’s cities. Peacebuilders talk increasingly about violence rather than conflict, as more deaths are caused outside traditional conflict situations. Within Europe, types of violence where a peacebuilding approach could be applied include urban, criminal and gang violence in European cities. Several years of economic crises, rising economic inequality and high levels of youth unemployment have made many European cities a new focus for peacebuilding efforts, especially with respect to social integration and violence reduction efforts.

Europe in the world: building peace and generating conflict at the same time. Many European actors are engaged in peacebuilding elsewhere in the world. At the governmental and intergovernmental levels, there has been an increase in the use of peacebuilding approaches, including an increase in the number and size of European peacebuilding organisations, as well a new focus on peacebuilding by development organisations. This boom might be ending due to the continuing cuts in development assistance which are one of the knock-on effects of the financial crisis.

In contrast, Europe also generates conflict elsewhere in the world, including continued arms exports, complicity in poor governance and human rights abuses, political and economic support for abusive governments, increased demand for trafficked goods and people, and through the facilitation of illicit financial flows, including money-laundering and hosting stolen state assets. While work is taking place to tackle these causes of conflict, it is not always prioritised by peacebuilding actors or directly linked to efforts to address conflict. In addition, the legacies of the military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, and continued application of counter-terrorism policies, are contributing to conflict and instability in these countries and neighbouring regions.

Opportunities for building peace in Europe

Conflict analysis. Support to efforts to build peace in the situations of ongoing violence and risk of conflict is important, given that in all cases there are also opportunities, from the changing stance of the government in Georgia, to the revival of peace negotiations in Cyprus, to the use of the EU enlargement framework in the Western Balkans. A detailed analysis of the conflict risks and elaboration of possible peacebuilding responses would be a logical next step in tackling conflict risk in Europe. If the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals both include peace and are universal, they could also be used as a framework for addressing conflict risks in Europe.

A common agenda for prevention. There is widespread support for preventive action, especially given the prevailing evidence about cost effectiveness. In practice, however, a key challenge is the operationalisation of prevention, i.e. moving from policy commitments and platitudes to ensure that preventive action takes place and then demonstrating results. In the related fields of prevention of genocide and mass atrocities and humanitarian work discussions on preventive action are taking place, such as in the debate on resilience. There may be scope for collective action and the development of a common agenda on prevention. Collective action is more feasible when the focus is on activities rather than on concepts or principles, discussion of which tends to lead to an emphasis on differences rather than similarities. Opportunities for collective activities could include: development of integrated early warning systems and integrated risk analysis; jointly publicising examples of successful prevention; preventive diplomacy, including
mediation and political crisis management missions; and measuring, comparing and campaigning for preventive capacity.

**European foreign policies.** The EU is described as a normative power, meaning variously that it is a model for others to follow, a community that other nations aspire to join or that it is a promoter of norms elsewhere in the world through a (to some extent) ethical foreign policy. The role of the EU in promoting peace may be threatened by the campaign to increase military power of the EU that was prominent in the run up to the Summit in December 2013. There will be a change in leadership in all the main EU institutions during 2014. Influencing the people and their policies is an opportunity for European peacebuilding organisations, but given the continued – and indeed increased – role of the Member States, targeting them is a means to this end. Influencing European states’ bilateral action is also crucial, with peacebuilding integrated to a very limited extent in most cases, and challenges posed by the rise of commercial diplomacy and likely cuts in development assistance.

**The EU’s Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policies.** The EU’s enlargement policy is considered a success in general and in terms of promoting peace, including through institutional reform, an emphasis on minority protection and the engagement of elites. With the prospect of membership, that provides considerable economic and political benefits, the EU is able to combine an important incentive with tough conditions in a managed process to support peaceful development. The success of the enlargement policy stands in contrast to the EU’s European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which frames its approach in its eastern and southern ‘neighbourhoods’. A key task of the next leadership of EU external affairs will be to reform the ENP, including better integration of peace and conflict. The EU’s role in supporting peace elsewhere in the world is hampered by the complexity of its funding mechanisms, which means that many peacebuilding organisations struggle to apply for and manage the funds. Although the problem is well known, the EU decision makers in question (the Member States and the European Parliament, rather than the European Commission) have not demonstrated a commitment to reform.

**Peace in European development assistance.** Europe remains a major provider of development assistance, through European countries’ bilateral agencies and collectively through the EU. While not wishing to overstate the role of development assistance, in countries where it makes up a large proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) it still has the potential to contribute to positive change. The extent to which European development assistance is supporting peace is hard to measure comprehensively. Evaluations indicate this is happening but that it could be improved. Peacebuilding organisations argue for the reform of development assistance to integrate peace through conflict sensitivity based on analysis to identify conflict risks and ensuring that assistance is focused on having a positive impact on conflict, or at least on not doing harm; on using development assistance to support peacebuilding activities; and on taking a political rather than technical approach to development, such as analysing and addressing power dynamics, supporting reform to improve accountability of state institutions, including the security sector, and focusing on state-society relations.

There is also an opportunity to engage in the current review of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria that determine eligible uses of development assistance, with some European governments pushing for changes that would allow for a wider range of security and defence activities, including currently excluded military expenditure to be funded by development assistance.
From a peacebuilding perspective, the current criteria are adequate because as they allow inclusion of civilian peacebuilding activities as part of development policy and practice.

**Returning fighters.** A prominent issue in the European media is the security risk posed by the return of fighters from the conflict in Syria. According to the European Police Office (EUROPOL), up to 2000 EU citizens are involved. This is another issue on which a peacebuilding response could highlight the need to address the root causes of the problem, such as disaffection, social exclusion and Islamophobia, which are among the factors leading to the recruitment of young people into the fighting.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

**Tackling the mismatch in supply of and demand for peacebuilding.** For a variety of political and financial reasons, peacebuilding activities do not always fit the need. There is a concentration of peacebuilding in certain geographic areas and a concentration on certain types of activity. For example, while there are conflict risks across Central Asia, activities focus on Kyrgyzstan, largely for operational reasons, with the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU active, and an increase in the efforts of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). After violence or during high-profile transitions there might be an influx of peacebuilding actors, for example, in Tunisia, Myanmar or Mali (yet four years ago few peacebuilding activities were carried out in the Sahel region despite the conflict risks). Finding support for long-term preventive work remains difficult.

**Financial support.** Limited resources are available for peacebuilding activities in Europe, which is one of the reasons why many civil society organisations have focused their attention on other regions. Where funds are available, the range of funding sources is not as wide as it was. For example, most European bilateral donors have ended their direct funding of activities in the Western Balkans; EU member states work through the EU. While this improves ‘coordination’, the complexity of EU funding mechanisms also leads to problems in accessing the funds for many organisations in the region. As well as a lack of funding for peace programme work in Europe, funding for advocacy work to influence European policy-makers is scarce. While peace work can and does of course continue without funding – for example, through the use of volunteers and activists – the consequences continue to be a certain distortion when it comes to the work of higher profile peacebuilding organisations that focus on regions other than Europe. In contrast, human rights organisations and indeed humanitarian organisations are increasingly active in Europe, both in response to need and because they have unrestricted funding.

**The role of the UN.** Despite the number of regional inter-governmental bodies working on peace and security within Europe, there is still a role for the UN. First, the UN as a neutral player has a role to play in conflict prevention and supporting peace processes. There may be situations in which it would be the preferred mediator and/or facilitator of dialogue among conflict parties, in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. Indeed, the UN still has missions in Europe and it is playing a part in the crisis in Ukraine. Secondly, the norm-setting and enforcing role of the UN is also relevant in Europe. The implementation of international legal standards within Europe and elsewhere in the world by Europe should be monitored by the UN as for any other region. The role of the UN is perhaps complicated by the fact that European countries are its biggest donors.

**Europe strengthening UN peacebuilding and vice versa.** The relationship between the EU and the UN is multi-faceted and there are many ways in which peacebuilding could be better
integrated. While the UN has previously viewed the EU primarily as a donor the relationship is taking on a more political dimension through regular contact between staff at all levels and through the creation of political posts at the UN office in Brussels.

In the area of peacebuilding, as the EU continues to grow its capacity, the two may struggle to avoid competition for resources (human and financial) and for roles in conflict-affected countries. It depends in part on the relationship between the EU and its own Member States: if the EU is present in a conflict in addition to a range of EU Member States then it is more likely to enter into competition with the UN – they become two multilaterals in the same territory. However, if the EU is present instead of EU Member States, it has a different role – it is a regional actor, a vehicle for collective action on behalf of European nations.

While the EU itself and individual countries remain major donors to the UN, they have leverage to support reform of the UN system and to improve its effectiveness at building peace. On the other hand, the UN can also support peacebuilding in Europe by ensuring that normative standards are upheld in Europe as well as other regions and by European actors when they are engaged in conflict elsewhere. The UN’s work to support regional bodies’ efforts in peacebuilding should also include the EU as a target, rather than viewing it solely as a vehicle for ‘capacity-building’ exercises directed at other regional organisations.

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About this Paper: This paper is part of a series providing regional peacebuilding perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The authors’ task was to provide an authentic, original and honest analysis about three questions: (1) What are the main challenges for building peace in your region? (2) What are the key opportunities for building peace in your region over the next one or two years? (3) What would be the key support necessary to build peace in your region over the next one or two years? Is there any specific role for the UN?

Disclaimer: All views expressed in this article are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, or the four Platform partners: the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP); the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO).

About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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Middle East
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding
Riccardo Bocco and Souhaïl Belhadj

Introduction
For most observers, the past four years in the Middle East have witnessed a rapidly changing context at an almost unprecedented scale, both at the domestic and regional level. The hopes for political liberalisation – if not for the advent of Arab (Muslim) democratic regimes – generated by the ‘Arab Springs’ have been crushed by the restoration of military authoritarian regimes (e.g. Egypt), have left countries in a total political mayhem (e.g. Libya), or have opened the door to transition processes whose outcome looks very uncertain (e.g. Yemen). Though many ‘jumlukiyas’1 in the region have been taken by surprise and rapidly toppled, their fate doesn’t seem to be completely over (like in Syria or in Iraq). Neither the US or Europe seem to have adopted coherent policies towards the region. The geopolitical influence has shifted from the great powers to the regional ones: Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia now have their say in a context marked by the manipulation of Sunni and Shiite religious-political affiliations.

What has also emerged in the region as a relative surprise, is the presence of new Al-Qa’ida-type organisations through Islamic jihadist groups, whose development in terms of military power, funding, local and international recruitment networks and warring brutality, have few comparisons over the past century. While these new transnational non-state armed groups are becoming territorialised, it is possible to underline several domestic and international dynamics that have conditioned their success but may also hamper their future.

In a region facing such an important moment of change, the list of challenges to building peace and wishes for opportunities for peace seem to be endless. This paper is an analysis of the challenges and opportunities for building peace in the Middle East based on the authors’ field research in the region. The authors attempt to present an analysis about how challenges and opportunities are perceived in the region, or ‘from the street’, which sometimes reveals a certain mismatch with international perceptions.

1 The Arabic word jumlukiya, coined in Egypt in the early 2000s, is a contraction of jumhuriyyah (republic) and mamlaka (kingdom) and was meant to define the quasi-monarchical powers of presidents-for-life in a number of Arab republics.
Challenges to building peace in the Middle East

Rapid change but underlying conflict drivers remain. A clear peculiarity of the Middle Eastern context is the relatively rapid alternation between periods of stability and sudden relapse into conflict, both at the domestic and regional level. This constant fluctuation is one of the biggest challenges for international policy-makers. However, to see the ‘Egyptian coup’ of A. Sisi as the symbol of an end of the Arab Springs means, in our view, losing sight of more fundamental processes of social change that will be at work for decades. Actually, all of the factors that led to social unrest – poverty, inequality, corruption and social exclusion – are still present in most Arab countries. Besides ousting dictators and restoring dignity, the Arab uprisings demanded policies of power decentralisation that could better reflect the needs of local identities and communities. So far, and with the exception of Tunisia, neither local governments nor foreign powers have changed their economic models or approaches.²

Open hostility to ‘Western’ concepts. ‘International peacebuilding’ – understood as a process to achieve more inclusive and representative democracies – has faced many challenges in the Middle East. The support of many Western states for authoritarian regimes in the Arab World during the past two and a half decades has been associated with counteracting the ‘Islamic threat’, waging war against the ‘axis of the evil’ during the Bush period, and with pushing agendas of economic liberalisation that have accentuated domestic inequalities. Moreover, there has also been a failed attempt to ‘bring democracy’ to Afghanistan and Iraq (as an alternative to authoritarianism) creating a lot of disillusionment and open hostilities to ‘Western’ notions of ‘democratisation’, statebuilding or ‘peacebuilding’ across large parts of the Middle East.

Lack of leadership and double standards. The lack of leadership and vision among the Western allies after the Libyan ‘adventure’ to topple Qadhafi has left most of the Arab World to its own devices. The economic crisis in Europe and the Obama administration’s policies of withdrawing the military from the Middle East have not gone without consequences. The reassertion of Russia on the Middle East scene and the present crisis in Ukraine have also contributed to give a flavour of ‘Cold War’ in a changed context, but in no way this has contributed to help in settling down the unravelling conflicts in the region. A dramatic case in point is Syria, where President Assad has been waging a ferocious repression against his opponents, slaughtering hundreds of thousands amid lukewarm reactions from the international community. What seems even more worrying is that after more than three years of civil war, the Syrian regime is beginning to appear to be the last rampart against ISIS³ and a possibly (paradoxical) ally in the regional context. ISIS has also become a clear menace for many other Arab regimes in the region – Saudi Arabia and Jordan, in particular.

Changing geopolitics: When looking at Arab regional geopolitics, one can see how the post-Arab Springs context has influenced the repositioning of several regimes in a scenario of shifting alliances. The old Saudi-Iranian rivalry, fought through third party States (like in Iraq during the 1980s, in Lebanon during the past two decades, or Syria since 2011) with the respective support to Sunni and Shi’a Islamic organisations throughout the Muslim world, seems to be developing with new dynamics. Saudi Arabia, which has so far been able to contain its own domestic opposition, has been strongly supporting the restoration of the military regime in Egypt and has,

² See M. Aguirre, ‘Not the end of the “Arab Spring”, is it?’, Open Democracy, June 2014, Available at: http://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/mariano-aguirre/not-end-of-arab-spring-is-it.
³ This is the English acronym for ‘Islamic State in Syria and Iraq’, known in Arabic as Da’ish. Recently, its commander in chief, Abu Bakr al-Baghadi, has also proclaimed himself ‘caliph’ over the liberated territories of Iraq and Syria and modified ISIS into IS, i.e. the ‘Islamic State’. 
therefore, been a pivotal funder.\textsuperscript{4} Lately, in countries like Palestine and Egypt, the support to Muslim Brothers’ organisations has been instead coming from Qatar, which has tried somehow to defy Saudi Arabian leadership in the Arabian Peninsula. Finally, the unfolding possible new relationships between Iran and the US over nuclear issues has not left Saudi Arabia and Israel indifferent. But the need to shore up the advance of ISIS and its allies may bring new tactical alliances among former enemies.

\textbf{Regional variations}

**Jordan.** The only regime that seems stable is the Jordanian Kingdom, which over the past 15 years has become a soft ‘security state’, though not exempt from economic fragility. Jordan also represents the only Arab state in the region that has known the most remarkable continuity of its elites from the Mandate period until today and one that has been able to overcome all sorts of challenges induced by the Arab nationalist movements of the 1950s and 1960s, has gone through two Arab-Israeli wars, and has survived in a regional context of prolonged turmoil (e.g. the various Gulf wars, two intifadas in the West Bank, several waves of refugees from Palestine, Iraq and now Syria). The kingdom is today host to many meetings for discussing the political changes in the region and home to many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations for multilateral or bilateral cooperation.

**Lebanon** survives amid prolonged governmental crises but hasn’t found yet stability in its post-civil war period, punctuated by the retreat of the Israeli army from its Southern territories in 2000 and the end of the Syrian occupation in 2005. Actually, the amnesty law promulgated in the early 1990s, the relative independence of Hizballah inside the Lebanese territory (and the war with Israel in 2006), including the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri have not been conducive to build the bases for a new social pact that could guarantee long-term political stability. The civil war in Syria is having also its consequences on neighbouring Lebanon through massive flows of refugees (presently constituting more than 25% of the resident population), and through episodes of internal fighting between Shi’a and Sunni communities.

**The Israeli-Palestinian** conflict has known a new dramatic confrontation during the summer of 2014. The possibilities for brokering dialogue, not to say peace, seem to be waning day-by-day. The positions of the last two Netanyahu governments appear to be more and more radical about negotiating a long-term settlement. Engulfed in an occupation that has lasted for the past 47 years, the successive Israeli governments of the ‘Oslo and post-Oslo’ years have kept expanding their colonies in the West Bank and, notwithstanding the unilateral withdrawal of their settlers in 2005, have kept Gaza under a de facto occupation that controls the air, maritime and land borders of the Strip. On the Palestinian side, a moribund and corrupt Palestinian Authority that after the 1993 Washington Agreements has kept policing the Palestinian population for the Israelis and has had endless and fruitless negotiations with its ‘partner in peace’, has paved the way to the success of Hamas and its allies. Hamas and its allies have replaced a frozen Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the national liberation movement and today represent the last rampart against the Israeli occupation. Apart from ‘normalising’ its military operations and continuing its settlement expansion, which is making of the option of a ‘Two-State solution’ wishful thinking, the present Israeli government doesn’t seem to have a long-term vision of a peaceful settlement. Because of the long break in national unity since Hamas’ seizure of power in Gaza in 2007, the unwavering support of the US to Israel and the diffuse crisis of political

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\textsuperscript{4} While the US have maintained a steady military aid of roughly $1 billion per year, the Saudis have offered more than ten times the figure to President A. Sisi to cope with the dire economic situation in his country.
representation in both the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinians are undergoing a very gloomy period and do not see any light at the end of the tunnel. A deep distrust presently dominates Israeli-Palestinian relations and no ‘Mandelas’ appear to exist on either side. The media continue to portray the conflict as being about the validity of competing narratives, but it is a conflict about legitimacy and justice between two enemies who perceives themselves as ‘victims’, are deaf to each other and are engaged in an endless blame-game.

Opportunities for building peace in the Middle East

**Local level peacebuilding.** If one of the international donors’ roles in peacebuilding is also that of accompanying societies in transition at the local level, this could be seized as a chance for the UN to restore its credibility. Promoting dialogue and consensus-building should not be thought of only at national elites’ level and local UN personnel could have a role between their own societies and the organisation they represent in the field to promote new forms of more credible partnership. Political aid designed to support local governance structures and support future transition could be of the utmost importance.

**Security sector reforms** are clearly among the most difficult policies to implement in states that are at war or are preparing for it. Moreover, the members of the international military-industrial complex (including the local ones, i.e. Egypt and Israel) clearly have vested interests in sustaining strong armies to whom weapons of different kinds can be sold. While a more solid analysis of the relationship between the booming privatisation of military security and the interests of both the military-industrial complexes and the international oil companies in the region exceeds the size of this paper, there is scope for UN action. UNIDIR could play a new role in mediation and dialogue in the Middle East, while the OHCHR and the UNHCR could contribute to train military forces and provide intelligence in human rights courses, in cooperation with the ICRC.

**Forced Displacements and Diaspora(s).** More often than not, refugees are seen as ‘victims’ and a ‘burden’ for host countries who must manage the presence of a foreign population, inducing problems of access to shelter, food, health and education services. Refugees usually constitute a cheap labour force on the market, and create competition and conflict with the national population.

But refugees are not simply victims, they have also agency and this should be better taken into account. Though the UNHCR and the IOM have been progressively integrating this perspective in the past few years, a lot of work must still be done in thinking more about the potential of refugees and diasporas in general for peacebuilding. During the Lebanese civil war, for example, a UNDP database of Lebanese professionals in the diaspora was established, which was effective for mobilising their skills in support of various initiatives. Today, the Syrian diaspora is estimated to constitute around 18 million people worldwide – this certainly represents potential for mobilisation and future reconstruction.

While the juridical issues of refugeehood and the rights of return of the displaced populations must not be forgotten, the Iraqi and the Afghani cases have shown over the years the importance of the circulation of migrants and refugees, and their economic impact on their countries of origin, pending the solution of the conflicts. The Palestinian diaspora stands apart from other cases. Not only it is characterised by a massive presence of its members inside Israel and the Palestinian Territories, but it is also demographically concentrated in the Near East. Furthermore, what makes it different from other diaspora communities is the impossibility for the

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5 The last parliamentary elections in the Palestinian Territories date back to January 2006.
majority of the refugees to circulate in and out of their original country – today Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The UN should therefore maintain and strengthen their presence in the region through UNRWA and the UNHCR, and foster better exchange of experiences and visions among the sister agencies and with the IOM.

**The Role of Women.** With the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and through Security Council Resolution 1325, the international community committed to increase women’s participation in conflict prevention, post-conflict and peacebuilding. However, most official political processes in the Middle East do not seem to have respected this commitment. Donor funding in conflict-affected contexts should not view women only as victims of conflict instead of considering them as possible leaders in post-conflict peacebuilding. Excluding women means excluding half or more of the population from key decision-making moments. Bringing women negotiators to the table means bringing different visions and experiences, which can also contribute to better, more inclusive, peace settlements. Aimed at fostering women’s empowerment, UNIFEM should better carve-out its possible niches of action and make its voice heard in collaboration with sister UN agencies.

**Transitional Justice.** With the exception of the ‘Equity and Conciliation Commission’ in Morocco, the Arab Middle East has so far been the only region worldwide that has not implemented transitional justice measures in post-conflict or post-dictatorship contexts. The wishes expressed in post-civil war Lebanon or in post-Saddam Iraq have not materialised and there is a case for delaying transitional justice for the sake of short-term national cohesion so as not to disrupt the transition process or the establishment of new democratic institutions. Nevertheless, the timing and sequence of transitional justice measures are contingent upon the success of the democratic transition and the degree of political power held by conservative forces that consider transitional justice a threat to their political or economic status. However, this should not prevent the UN from preparing the field for when the time is ripe, from fostering South-South cooperation with Africa and Latin America, and from striking the balance between retributive and restorative justice. More attention could also be given to how to integrate Islamic notions and practices into peacebuilding strategies, as recently advocated by the Islamic Relief Organisation.

**The Israeli-Palestinian Thorny Conflict and International Aid.** There is an urgent need to change the aid philosophy for the Palestinian Territories. Similar to the North American settler colonialism, where the main goal was the eviction of Indians and land capture, the goal of political Zionism has always been to divorce the land of Palestine from its inhabitants and to return it to ‘God’s chosen people’. By ignoring this dynamic, foreign aid to Palestine has reinforced it. Aid projects in the ‘Oslo and post-Oslo period’ have helped repair Palestinian roads and connect Palestinian villages to electricity, but this only relieved the occupier of its duties under international law to provide for the occupied population and has further allowed Israel to focus its resources on settlement construction. Aid to the Palestinian Authority also relieves the occupier of its burden of policing and maintaining control over the occupied population. If Western donors want to see a Palestinian economy grow, they need to apply political pressure on Israel to stop actively de-developing it. Palestinians do not need hundreds of millions of dollars in bilateral aid. They need full control over their own natural resources; sovereignty over the holy sites and tourist attractions in East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and other areas of the West Bank; control over their territorial waters in Gaza for fishing and gas exploration; and the ability to build houses, schools, roads, electricity plants, telecommunications networks, sewage treatment facilities, factories
and water wells without Israeli permits or fear of their destruction by the Israeli military. As already noted in World Bank reports of the early 2000s, no amount of aid can bring about a just, positive, and lasting peace until the fundamental injustices of occupation and dispossession are seen for what they are. The myth of peace-making in Palestine has blown-up: continuing to pay the salaries of Palestinian Authority employees confined within Gaza on the grounds that this contributes to peace doesn’t make anymore sense. As M. Turner has recently argued, peace-building aid in the realms of governance, development and security has rather operated as a counterinsurgency tool to ensure Palestinian acquiescence in the face of violent dispossession.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

The UN certainly does not need to ‘reinvent the wheel’: its peacebuilding mandate is the essence and the very reason of its existence, as established at the time of its creation in 1945 in San Francisco. In the post-Cold War period, the Agenda for Peace has helped to spread different practices and concepts in the field, sometimes in creative and innovative ways. As a multistakeholder and cross-sectorial process, peacebuilding usually unfolds over long periods of time and necessitates stamina from all the parties involved.

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).** A potentially important UN body in the region is ESCWA, whose story goes hand-in-hand with the history of conflict in the region. Setup in Beirut, ESCWA moved its headquarters to Baghdad due to the Lebanese Civil War, then to Amman during the embargo years against Saddam Hussein’s regime, and finally it ‘repatriated’ to Beirut in the 2000s through the strong support of R. Hariri’s government. Notwithstanding the critiques against its management or its internal difficulties (predominantly those that plague most international bureaucracies, i.e. mirroring inter- and intra-state relationships and of personal ambitions), ESCWA has continued monitoring the socio-economic conditions of the Arab World and has produced valuable material for policy-making, which has not always received due credit.

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** has seen its role increasing in the region. With the UNHCR, the OHCHR performs an important mandate in reminding state members to comply with international law. Again, it would be too easy to criticise the shortfalls of the Agency in holding former perpetrators accountable. What should be emphasised, in our view, is the contribution of the OHCHR in constantly expanding the awareness of the rights and duties of individuals and states in relation to international law and, therefore, setting new limits to political (unlawful) decision-making and related practices.

**United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).** Created in December 1949, the Agency today assists almost 5.5 million Palestinian refugees residing in five fields – Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon – and employs more than 30,000 civil servants, 99% of whom are Palestinians and Arabs of different nationalities. Because of its mandate to provide education, shelter, health and social services, UNRWA has often been called the ‘Blue State’ (in reference to the UN flag). While the developmental and humanitarian ‘lessons to be learned’ from its history are manifold and most valuable in the 21st century context of the Near East, the Agency has always been under pressure in the host countries and regularly accused of assisting terrorists by Israel. While a group of US senators has

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been taking the lead since the Second Intifada to push the American administration to withdraw its funding, one should not forget that UNRWA was set up in the aftermath of the 1948 war, the creation of Israel and the forced displacement of more than 750,000 people. The Agency is mandated to assist the still-surviving elderly Palestinians and most of the 1948 refugees’ descendants, pending a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, in our opinion, two main plagues presently affect the UN system. First, the bureaucratisation of its work has contributed to an inflated ‘peace industry’ effect, which has gone beyond its possibility of control, very much like the ‘development industry’ in most ‘beneficiary’ countries. Second, and not unrelated to the above, the funding needs for field activities have contributed to someway perverting the oft-cited imperatives of collaboration and coordination among sister agencies. In what has become a competitive market for the implementation of national or international programmes in specific countries, too often one can witness UN programmes or departments pitted against each other for gaining contracts.

Appropriate measures aiming at addressing these kinds of issues could certainly contribute to clearing the way and alleviating the burden on the already uneasy path of peacebuilding implementation.

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About this Paper: This paper is part of a series providing regional peacebuilding perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The authors’ task was to provide an authentic, original and honest analysis about three questions: (1) What are the main challenges for building peace in your region? (2) What are the key opportunities for building peace in your region over the next one or two years? (3) What would be the key support necessary to build peace in your region over the next one or two years? Is there any specific role for the UN?

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About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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North Africa
Regional perspectives for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Souhaïl Belhadj and Riccardo Bocco
Translated by Natasha White

Introduction

Since the popular uprisings in Tunisia in 2010, the states of North Africa – Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya – have been struggling to contain the destabilising effects of the ‘Arab Spring’. The crisis in Libya feeds this climate of regional instability through the activities of numerous transnational armed groups operating along the southern borders of Tunisia and Algeria in the Sahara desert. The cross-border traffic of goods and weapons facilitated by these illicit networks has increased to concerning levels, and the states of the Maghreb must face up to the infiltration of jihadi sub-groups of Al-Qaïda.1 Such is the case in Algeria, but most starkly in Tunisia – a country weakened by its dwindling national security apparatus. Such a situation is conducive to regional instability and insecurity, and reinforces fears of increased interventionism by foreign powers in North Africa.

To combat these ever-present threats of civil war and disorder, the North African governments have been pressured, each in their own way, to instigate political reforms. To date, no state is sure to master these change processes, not even Morocco or Algeria who have otherwise managed to establish a limited and controlled political opening.

Despite the uncertainty that weighs upon the evolution of the regime, the Tunisian government has nevertheless adopted an original path of political transition. It is banking on the establishment of a local democratic governance system, in order to increase the inclusion of Tunisian citizens in the state and to improve cohesion among the political elite. The emergence of a decentralised and pluralist power system among Tunisian communities would lay the roots for a future democratic state. The advance of Tunisia along this transition path could, therefore, present a role model for other countries in the Maghreb, in

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doing so encouraging both regional stability and political development. In Libya, for example, where the Kadhafi state has been replaced in many provinces by armed militia, the state restructuring process could be inspired by Tunisia’s experience.

The United Nations (UN), in cooperation with the European Union (EU), could play a supporting role in the stabilisation and political development of a troubled North Africa. The implementation of new models of political participation and regional integration are clearly orientated along these lines. The development of autonomous and pluralist local institutions, as well as the establishment of a consensus on a joint North African security policy could offer two potential paths out of the crisis.

**Challenges to building peace in North Africa**

In the aftermath of the ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings, the environment of instability and political hostility has further deteriorated. Transnational armed trafficking and jihadi groups were able to profit from the disorganisation of the Tunisian security forces and the collapse of the Libyan state.\(^2\) These groups have also strongly reinforced their presence in the border regions in collaboration with Al-Qaïda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Tunisia and Libya were particular targets of armed attacks and bombings by movements such as Ansar al-shari’a. But Algeria has also revealed signs of weakness in the face of a growing jihadi threat, as evidenced by the kidnappings in 2013 from the gas production sites in the south. Finally, Morocco is exposed to both Saharan and Sahelian jihadism, particularly following the break-out of war in Mali after the Tuareg insurrection and, later, with the jihadi-led uprising, involving groups such as al-Qaïda, Ansar al-dine and Mojwa (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa).

Political instability and a poor security situation persist in North Africa, thus hampering any political and economic development. The causes are numerous, linked both to processes of state formation and the type of governance regime adopted in each case. Algeria and Libya have developed economies based upon oil and gas rents. Internal struggles to reinforce control over these resources have consequently produced highly fragile political equilibriums. Libya’s fragility is further weakened due to a society that does not have a long established state tradition. Moreover, the mode of government proposed by Kadhafi during his rise to power was based upon a ‘dismantling’ of the monarchic state.\(^3\) In comparison to Libya, Tunisia and Morocco have recognised some form of governmental stability over a much longer period. Their governmental structures were further reinforced by a rapid extension of bureaucracy during the colonial period. Tunisia and Morocco are thus more resilient than Algeria and Libya to destabilising factors, be they internal or external.\(^4\)

While they differ according to historical trajectory, colonial heritage and thus internal political equilibriums, the North African states still have some structural features in common, symptomatic of the difficulties they all witness in surmounting the profound crises they face. Throughout the region, leaders have exercised a highly centralised and sovereign state power. At a national level, this has lent to corruption and an unequal distribution of resources, while at a regional level, it has hindered the constitution of a security cooperation and coordination agency. The North African governments have, therefore, found themselves without solutions to a

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\(^4\) For the last three decades, the principle destabilising factors for countries in the Maghreb have been: Islamist opposition; territorial and border conflicts between Morocco and Algeria, and between Libya and Tunisia; and armed groups trafficking goods and weapons in the Sahara-Sahel region under the guise of political claims.
deteriorating political and social situation in hinterland areas. They have similarly proved themselves ineffective – even powerless – in treating transnational security problems.

In general, the history of the contemporary North African states showcases the difficulty in establishing a model that reconciles both political and economic development. The Barcelona Process – tasked with overcoming this double challenge through Euro-Mediterranean cooperation – revealed its limits. The substance of the ‘Euro-Med’ partnership was a source of disagreement, even powerless in treating transnational security problems. Meanwhile, the Mediterranean Union – a regional integration process following on from the Barcelona Process – has come to a complete standstill. A development path combining economic and political liberalism has not, therefore, come to fruition in North Africa.

Today, only the Moroccan and Algerian regimes appear to be little rattled by the wave of protests ignited by the ‘Arab Spring’. Morocco has managed to defuse an explosive political and social situation by reactivating a process of political reforms. Mohammed VI initiated constitutional reform by evolving the regime towards a more consensus-based monarchy. The project really gained momentum in the aftermath of the ‘20 February Movement’, a coalition of multiple protest groups. The Moroccan reform facilitated an expansion of parliamentary rights and a system wherein an elected political majority can govern under supervision of the King. In comparison to Morocco, Algeria has not agreed to liberalising the regime. Nevertheless, the Algerian authorities have surpassed certain social expectations by redistributing oil revenues towards local development economies, for example youth employment and investment agencies.

However, despite these advances, the impacts of political reform in Morocco and socio-economic reform in Algeria remain insufficient while the leaders continue to restrict pluralism through highly centralised political and administrative structures. In doing so, the leaders have delayed the implementation of a decentralisation project at a local level. Yet, for thirty years, this project has represented a demand by local political and administrative elites, as well as of civil society, in both Morocco and Algeria. The delaying of its implementation has, therefore, sparked fears of a forthcoming confrontation between society and the regime.

If this were to be the case, the Moroccan and Algerian powers would adopt defensive policies to secure their positions. They thus would not seek to resolve the territorial conflict over Western Sahara that undermines their bilateral relations, as this would require a reopening of the Algeria-Morocco border that has been shut since 1994.

More generally, this situation has prevented the implementation of a North African institutional framework, an indispensable tool to coordinate the intelligence services, armies and political leaders in combatting the destabilising effects of transnational armed groups’ attacks. The implementation of such a regional framework would contribute towards limiting the infiltration of Libyan jihadists towards Tunisia and Algeria. Moreover, it would have helped to prevent the destabilisation of the Malian state, as well as the proliferation of non-state armed groups across

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the Sahel region. In the absence of such a regional framework, we can expect a resurgence of Algeria-Morocco’s geopolitical rivalries, as well as difficulties on behalf of the Tunisian authorities in securing the border with Libya. The current Libyan political leaders – who continue to lack the benefits of coordinated security assistance from their Maghreb neighbours – are failing to put an end to the militia groups’ violent factionalism that is undermining the country’s unity. The difficulties experienced so far by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) bear witness to the (im)possibilities of implementing its mandate.

In summary, highly centralised state politics and weak regional integration of security policies have combined to prolong a climate of hostility across North Africa. In such a context, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) could be an important partner in the fight against terrorism and international organised crime. Moreover, given that North Africa is an important transit or final destination for sizeable migration movements from sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) states therefore receive much pressure from the EU to contain the waves of migrants and refugees, and manage the foreign populations in their territories. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should, therefore, accompany the North African States in establishing national asylum systems and safeguarding protection spaces, particularly in Libya and Algeria (e.g. for the Sahrawi refugees). Neglecting the migration impact would equate to the potential sparking of another factor of socio-political instability.

**Opportunities for building peace in North Africa**

The Tunisian crisis sparked in December 2011 is evidence of weakening of regional state structures and a synonym of broader regional instability. Yet, a strengthening of state structures must not lead to a return to authoritarianism. The reorganisation of state institutions in the region must instead work towards deepening the level of political participation and representation. This process must begin at a local level, as it is here that these institutions have revealed their most profound weaknesses.

In fact, the Tunisian uprisings that served to catalyse other ‘Arab Springs’ originated in rural regions. The towns of Sidi Bouzid, Regueb and Souk Jadid in the centre of the country, for example, were the first to rise up and did so long before the movements touched the capital, Tunis. The central powers were unable to prevent their regional and municipal representatives in these hinterland regions from stepping down amidst pressure from the protesters. Using their local representatives as scapegoats, they justified their actions by claiming that they were “wrongly elected” or, in other words, collaborators of Ben Ali’s regime. The same occurred with other local representatives, including governors, delegates and sector leaders.

These forced defections led to a de facto suspension of the provincial political and administrative machine. Although the leaders of the machine were equipped with few resources and did not possess exclusive powers, they nevertheless coordinated a grouping of social networks – family-based, professional and economic systems. At a local level, they therefore constitute a reliable and organised connection to the government and presidential powers. As such, they function as agents of political consensus between the central state and local elites. The collapse of the regional government significantly weakened the local wings of the party in power, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD). No longer in a position to activate non-militant networks – these networks relying more upon opportunism than ideological support – the RCD was unable to organise counter-forces in support of the President and government.

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8 The French ‘territoriale’ has been translated into English as ‘local’. See later examples: “local administration” from the French ‘administration territoriale’ (p.5) and ‘local governments’, from the French ‘collectivités territoriales’ (p.6).
The Tunisian government was no longer supported by the Tunisian Labour Union (UGTT), which up to that point had followed a logic of conciliation with the government. The UGTT therefore participated from a very early stage in the popular movement through the leanings of its local antennas.

The participation of the UGTT in the protest movements and the weaknesses of the local administration combined to provide a tipping point in the Tunisian crisis. The Tunisian government, deprived of support from its two local intermediaries, was unable to negotiate an agreement with the protestors. No longer playing their intermediary roles, the UGTT and the local administration contributed to the disruption of everyday order. This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that the transitional government, formed after the ousting of Ben Ali, prioritised reactivating these institutional networks in an effort to re-establish political authority.

New compromises and arrangements between social groups must, therefore, be established in any response directed towards solving recurring issues such as: the replacement of political and economic leaders; wealth and revenue redistribution; property rights; and the establishment of appropriate tax rates. In firmly inscribing the principle of democratic governance and local participation in the Constitution, Tunisia has taken an important and perhaps decisive step in the right direction.

**Required support for building peace and the role of the UN**

Support for a peacebuilding project in North Africa must unfold in two directions: (1) assistance for states in the region in their evolution from highly-centralised authoritarianism to decentralised democracies; and (2) encourage the regional integration process through the implementation of a North African security organisation.

The UN, particularly through the UN Development Programme (UNDP), is in a position to accompany existing powers in increasing their levels of political participation and representation, particularly at the local level. This accompaniment must be undertaken in partnership with the EU, who has been engaged in the region for twenty years thanks to the Euro-Mediterranean partnerships. The primary European objective of installing an economic free trade zone is not adapted to the current situation nor to the heightened political instability. Consequently, it is important to concentrate UN efforts, in partnership with the EU, on peacebuilding and security. In addition to support for the Tunisian transition model, this involves the roll-out of a cooperation strategy with the UMA to coordinate regional security policies.

Of all the North African regimes shaken-up by the ‘Arab Spring’, the Tunisian state appears to be the most advanced in the transition process. If the Tunisian elites manage to consolidate the current transition process and reinforce control over the territory, security will improve across the Sahara and, by extension, the Sahel too. The Tunisian process must prioritise following-up on the demands of the population and elites regarding the implementation of local democratic governance structures. This project of political, social and administrative development can also apply in other North African countries in response to the dangers that threaten national cohesion, including: civil war and partitioning; bomb threats from armed groups; interference from foreign powers; and the decay of local political institutions.

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UNDP is already engaged in Tunisia through its ‘democratic governance’ programme. Yet, beyond electoral assistance missions and justice reforms, emphasis must be placed on the ‘management of local interests by elected representatives’. This principal, advocated by the UN and the World Bank, entertains the idea that the Tunisian citizens must have access to new and viable benefits. The application of this principle must over time favour the expansion of citizens’ rights, without any specific intervention from the state or new wave of top-down reforms. Following this hypothesis, it is the local governments that create and maintain the dynamic since they are no longer at the service of a particular authoritarian leader, clique or party.

In Tunisia, civil society organisations have promoted decentralisation and the reform of local administrations. In doing so, they have associated themselves with a broad platform of civil servants, jurists, past and new local leaders, as well as delegates from the Constitutional Assembly. The objective being that local institutions will no longer constitute a tool of corruption or other dishonourable behaviour for rulers, but as a tool for political development.

In summary, if the state and local governors opened-up to all types of organisation, including mass popular parties, a virtuous cycle of opportunity for claiming individual political rights and the guarantees of public liberty would be unleashed. Through this process, political development and political stability goes hand-in-hand, as a reorganisation of local power structures implies that new agreements on wealth distribution are sealed both between elites, and between elites and the general population. Such agreements could also lead to a new balance of political and economic interests from the state all the way down to the local level. The UN Office for North Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), in particular, could help to strengthen the capacity of member states to formulate policies in support of economic and social transformation in the Maghreb.

In Morocco, support is required for the ‘regional progress’ programme initiated by Mohammed VI in 2010. The UN is already engaged in the process through UNDP; however, although this vast project was presented as crucial for the political development of the Kingdom, only very tentative advances have been made. In fact, the Moroccan government is yet to submit a draft Organic Law to parliament – the true beginnings of a regional autonomisation process and local political pluralism.

In Algeria, the authorities have not questioned the country’s centralised politics and adopt the concept of ‘local democratic governance’ solely for rhetorical purposes. Yet, the constitution of an ‘autonomous local space for political representation and public action’ appears to be a response that is well-adapted to both developmental needs and the stability requirements emphasised by the Algerian people during the recent presidential elections.

UN engagement regarding stabilisation in Libya must first focus on re-establishing the security situation. But this project is proving to be a challenge while the states in the region object to delegating any sovereignty to a North African regional organisation. The UMA has not lived up to its promises to improve the political or economic situation and remains paralysed, notably regarding the Algeria-Morocco territorial dispute. The recent initiatives launched by Tunisia in 2012, followed by Algeria and then Morocco in 2014 have not yet benefitted from a true dynamic of cooperation, but are nonetheless evidence of revived political interest in regional integration. Once again, the UN and EU must adopt a coordinated approach to encourage the North African states to consider a regional security agreement. Resources much be mobilised with a view to eventually aligning the regional leaders on the content and form of a security
Although currently stagnant, the UMA could serve as a sample institutional framework to facilitate the implementation of regional inter-state policies.

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**Peacebuilding: A Review of the Academic Literature**

Vincent Chetail and Oliver Jütersonke

The notion of building peace in conflict-affected states and societies is not new, and certainly not one invented by the United Nations (UN). Contemporary discussions, nonetheless, might very well give this impression, not least since the inauguration of the UN’s ‘peacebuilding architecture’ in the wake of the 2005 World Summit, encompassing a UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) of 31 member states, a UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) based in New York, and a UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to help finance its mandates. But the endeavour to build peace is, of course, much more than the activities of a particular (legal and political) institutional set-up. Indeed, peacebuilding has gained in prominence – not just in specialised academic and practitioner circles, but also in the public discourse at large.

**Peacebuilding: Concepts, Actors and Institutions**

Ever since the work of the peace researcher Johan Galtung, it has become common parlance to distinguish between so-called ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace. The logic here is that peace is not just the absence of armed conflict and violence, but is indeed about the pursuit of social justice through equal opportunity, a fair distribution of power and material resources, and an equal protection by and in the face of the rule of law. Peace, then, means long-term peace. It means creating the conditions under which individuals in society can benefit from coherent legal frameworks, public order, political stability, and economic opportunities. And peacebuilding thus refers to all efforts to foster a sustainable peace through the establishment of institutions that promote and enable the non-violent resolution of tensions and disputes. Following Galtung

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1 This text is a reprint, with minor adjustments, of the introductory chapter to V. Chetail and O. Jütersonke (eds.), *Peacebuilding: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, four volumes (London & New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1-12. The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and the authors would like to express their gratitude to Routledge for the kind permission to republish this article.
Building peace nevertheless remains a rather ambiguous affair, and it is not at all the case that stakeholders and analysts agree on what the concept of peacebuilding entails. On the one hand is the very practical perspective taken by the likes of Paul Lederach, for whom peacebuilding involves concrete conciliation efforts in situations of conflict. On the other is peacebuilding conceived as a specific operational mandate, and Michael Barnett et al. (2007) identify a plethora of working definitions employed by various multilateral agencies and government donors in their attempts to institutionalise peacebuilding. As Ronald J. Fischer (1993) highlighted, according to Galtung’s conceptualisation peacebuilding is somehow at the interface between peacekeeping and peacemaking, between a robust third-party response to on-going violent conflict, and the establishment of conditions to be able to tackle the causes of the dispute. But this bridge-building function also throws up a whole host of questions related to which actors and institutions should be involved in the undertaking, what kind of mandate and resources ought to be involved, and what the timeframe for such an operation might be.

Yet repeated attempts to get all multilateral, governmental and non-governmental actors to agree on a precise definition of peacebuilding have not borne fruit – and in some respects, conceptual ambiguity might well be the lesser of two evils, as it allows international decision-makers the room to manoeuvre their way through potentially tricky negotiations. For most purposes, a functional differentiation of the specific sectors that make up the building blocks of something called ‘post-conflict peacebuilding’ might well be sufficient – along the lines of security, socio-economic welfare, and justice and the rule of law. What this might entail has been elaborated by Vincent Chetail’s peacebuilding lexicon (2009). But questions remain as to the compatibility of such an ambitious agenda with some of the UN’s guiding principles of sovereignty and neutrality, for instance (Bertram, 1995), and as has been argued in the case of Somalia, the very act of labelling a particular context as ‘post-conflict’ and the required intervention as ‘peacebuilding’ may be pernicious (Menkhaus, 2009). As Oliver Ramsbotham (2007: 170) points out, there is an inherent danger in applying a standard operating procedure to a wide range of disparate conflict settings, ‘rather like Wittgenstein’s locomotive cabin in which a uniform-looking set of handles in fact fulfil a number of diverse functions’.

The field of peacebuilding is thus potentially vast, and academia has not failed to join the conversation with a rapidly growing body of literature whose works are often written by research analysts straddling the practitioner-scholar divide. There is also a striking predominance of political science and the field of International Relations (see Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; and Zaum, 2013, for an overview), with contributions from the perspectives of international law, development studies, or anthropology, for instance, playing a more minor role. Thankfully, this is beginning to change, as there would otherwise be the risk of perpetuating a rather one-sided debate on the institutional dynamics of peacebuilding – one that, moreover, is decidedly Anglophone, with stakeholders and scholars at pains to find suitable equivalents in their respective languages for the very notion of ‘peacebuilding’ itself. More critical reflections on this

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hegemonic discourse, as well as on the transformative and emancipatory potential of peacebuilding activities (e.g. Fetherston, 2000) are therefore a welcome addition.

The ambiguity of peacebuilding also raises debates about the intervening actors who are (or should be) involved. Conflict mediators are certainly part of these discussions (Papagianni, 2010), which again demonstrates the practical and analytical grey zone between peacebuilding and peacemaking. The development community – and not least the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – has also been busy reflecting on what peacebuilding might mean to them, and how the term is part of contemporary concerns to rethink, both conceptually and programmatically, the complex linkages between security and development (see Uvin, 2002). What is more, even humanitarians have been spotted scratching their heads over whether or not the rise of the peacebuilding label is of relevance to their work. Do the UN guidelines and principles for civil-military coordination that were developed at the humanitarian-military interface apply for peacebuilding operations involving a variety of civilian actors (De Coning, 2007)? As Jennifer M. Hazen (2007) has convincingly argued based on evidence from Sierra Leone, it is highly questionable whether peacekeepers are equipped to handle peacebuilding tasks. So what, fundamentally, is the role of the armed forces in peacebuilding (Ankersen, 2004)?

As mentioned at the outset, current peacebuilding discussions, particular in practitioner and donor circles, are preoccupied with the merits of the current institutional set-up at the multilateral level. From the inventory of 69 UN missions since the end of the Cold War provided by Volker C. Franke and Andrea Warnecke (2009), the range and variability of interventions is brought starkly to light. And if the notion of peacebuilding is indeed leading to a transformation of peace operations (Diehl, 2006), what are the institutional ramifications of this trend? As Mats Berdal already argued in 2008, the UN’s peacebuilding architecture may already have seen its heyday, fallen victim early on to the many compromises that shaped its design (Stahn, 2005). Is the UN’s turn to peacebuilding, then, nothing else but a form of ‘organised hypocrisy’ that has replaced an election-based approach to determining when it is time to leave a post-conflict setting (Hirschmann, 2012)?

**Peacebuilding and Development: The Challenges of Security, Welfare, Justice and the Rule of Law**

In order to get to grips with such questions, it is worthwhile elaborating on some of the sectoral activities that make up the peacebuilding portfolio. As Rolf Schwarz (2005) outlines, these activities can be categorised along the three core functions of the Weberian state, namely to provide security, socio-economic opportunities and well-being (welfare), and a robust framework of justice and the rule of law (representation). Such a holistic (and by no means apolitical) peacebuilding approach that privileges a stable domestic order reflects recent debates in donor circles to link security and development concerns, which for decades were treated in separate institutional silos (Krause and Jütersenke, 2005). Until very recently, development cooperation agencies had very little interaction with their counterparts in foreign and defence ministries, and to this day the gap in institutional cultures remains prominent. But the aid effectiveness discourse has increasingly sought to transcend this mentality, and the World Bank’s *World Development Report 2011*, entitled ‘Conflict, Security and Development’,
exemplifies this significant change in mindset. Security and development concerns cannot be uncoupled and treated separately, and the concept of peacebuilding is in many ways the heuristic device through which to make sense of, and put into practice, such a joint approach.

As Astri Suhrke (2012) points out, however, linking a security agenda with peace and development concerns is not without its difficulties – particularly in situation where, as in Afghanistan, the military intervention dragged on, resulting in a contradictory situation of ‘waging war while building peace’. Yet even if combat does not continue to rage, the risk of a post-conflict situation slipping back into violence is omnipresent, leading to calls for peace support operations to privilege ‘security promotion’ efforts – in particularly security sector reform (SSR) and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. Increasingly, these activities run under the label of (interim) ‘stabilisation’ missions, as Nat J. Colletta and Robert Muggah (2009) outline. Again, the logic is to balance security concerns with development needs, and to harness the presence of military resources to reinforce post-conflict institutional structures that reduce levels of violence, improve (real and perceived) security, and instil a sense of trust in legal frameworks and law enforcement agencies. Results continue to be mixed, however, and questions remains as to how DDR, for instance, can be embedded into peacebuilding efforts and aligned more closely with broader development strategies (Hazen, 2011).

Indeed, the complexities of achieving the ‘R’ in DDR highlight the fact that security concerns need to be coupled with the socio-economic realities of the post-conflict situation. Many people will have profited from the ‘war economy’, not least from the uncontrolled extraction of natural resources, a practice that has the potential to significantly jeopardise well-meant peacebuilding initiatives (Brown, 2006). As Neil Cooper (2006) argues, however, it is necessary to look beyond a mere ‘control agenda’ that focuses primarily on the conflict trade in typical goods such as drugs and diamonds. ‘Conflict entrepreneurs’ are an intrinsic part of the post-conflict economy, and Cooper emphasises the need for peacebuilding practitioners to recognise and acknowledge the complicity of the developed world in creating the conditions for conflict, not least by providing the market for goods stemming from conflict zones. The economic legacy of conflict is thus a highly problematic reality faced by peacemakers and peacebuilders, and Heiko Nitzschke and Kaysie Studdard (2005) stress the need for governments, international organisations and societal actors to privilege a political economy perspective capturing the dynamics of the post-conflict setting.

Yet even if adequate provisions have been made in peace agreements to give combatants and violence entrepreneurs sufficient incentive structures to buy into the negotiated settlement (Wennmann, 2009), the socio-economic reality is going to be stark. Employment opportunities may be scarce, and a labour force with the necessary skill sets unavailable. A host of programming elements and policies thus need to be aligned in order to create the economic conditions for a viable post-conflict recovery – these go beyond fiscal strategies to include the repatriation of flight capital, accountable governance of extractive industries, and the effective management of infrastructural projects and construction booms (Collier, 2009). It will also require a broader definition of corruption that captures not just ‘the abuse of public office for private gain’, but the profiteering from peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts themselves – corrupt practices that span ‘lucrative subcontracting networks, the tax-free salaries of overpaid consultants, donor agencies’ aggressive promotion of FDI [foreign direct investment] ventures over domestic entrepreneurship, the fire-sale privatisation of public assets, and the liberalisation

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of trade and tax policies’ (Le Billon, 2008: 355). Indeed, the role of the business sector in peacebuilding is an issue that is only beginning to be discussed, and where a literature is set to emerge in the coming years.

Establishing the rule of law and generating the conditions for a degree of social justice is the third central pillar of peacebuilding efforts. As claimed by some authors, respect for the rule of law and confidence in state institutions is the central prerequisite for security and socio-economic considerations to bear fruit (Chesterman, 2005). Others, by contrast, have argued that the prioritisation of the rule of law entails banking on ‘legal or administrative solutions as a short cut to addressing political problems, fetishising the legal framework at the same time as marginalising the political sphere’ (Chandler, 2004: 312). In any event, the debate over the role of law – and constitution-making (Samuels, 2006) – in peacebuilding is set to continue. This debate is exemplified by what Vincent Chetail (2009) refers to as the jus post bellum for the purpose of encapsulating in one common frame of understanding the myriad of (fragmentary and potentially conflicting) norms of international law that are applicable in a post-conflict environment.

That environment is all about transitioning from a situation regulated by the jus in bello and jus ad bellum to one of long-term constitutional stability. Peacebuilding literature and practice thus spends considerable time elaborating a plethora of ‘transitional’ justice concepts for how societies can deal with past human rights abuses and emerge from violent conflict. These range from narrower truth and reconciliation mechanisms to more elaborate institutional arrangements encompassing international trials and legal institutions, based on the recognition that domestic and international criminal justice are not opposing, but mutually interdependent and overlapping systems (Stahn, 2005). But the jury is still out on whether ‘truth-telling’ or ‘truth-seeking’ initiatives are actually as conducive to peacebuilding as they are often made out to be, or whether, in the extreme, they may even lead to an exacerbation of tensions in society (Mendeloff, 2004). Similar concerns have been raised that the very notion of ‘transitional justice’, often externally imposed and culturally insensitive, is potentially harmful to the overall peacebuilding strategy (Lekha Sriram, 2007). Christine Bell (2009) thus questions the pertinence of conceiving transitional justice as a new, ‘inter-disciplinary’ field of study that may well obscure, rather than shed light on, the tensions between the range of practices and goals it claims to incorporate. What is clear, in any event, is that justice discourses continue to be in transition themselves (Bell, Campbell and Ni Aolain, 2004), and the role of law and legal institutions in peacebuilding remains one of its most challenging and under-studied aspects.

Building a Liberal Peace? Democratisation, the State and Civil Society

As the sectoral approach outlined above demonstrates, there is of course a teleological vision involved in much of this (externally driven) peacebuilding practice – one that Roland Paris described as ‘liberal internationalism’. Peacebuilding, according to Paris (1997: 56), ‘is in effect an enormous experiment in social engineering – an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organisation into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalisation’. Paris’ assertions sparked an on-going debate over the so-called ‘liberal peace’.
Needless to say, the subject matter of the debate is in itself in flux, and as Oliver P. Richmond (2006) examines in detail, the superficial ‘peacebuilding consensus’, whereby ‘like-minded liberal states coexist in a western-oriented international society and states are characterised by democracy, human rights, free markets, development, a vibrant civil society and multilateralism’ (Richmond, 2006: 298), is in itself contested, both academically and in practice. John Heathershaw (2008) argues that liberal peacebuilding entails a fragmented discursive environment centred around the notions of democratic peacebuilding, statebuilding and civil society, which merge into an amorphous ‘meta-narrative’ of what he calls ‘pragmatic peacebuilding’, a discourse that idealises and attempts to ‘self-legitimize’ the international community and its practices. In a similar vein, Michael Pugh (2005) questions the core assumptions of the economic dimension of the liberal peace project, namely the required convergence towards market liberalisation. Who is peacebuilding for, he asks, and what purpose does it serve? ‘The means for achieving the good life are constructions that emerge from the discourse and policy frameworks dominated by specific capitalist interests – when they correspond to the prevailing mode of ownership. Economic wisdom resides with the powerful’ (Pugh, 2005: 13).

As the case of Afghanistan illustrates (Ponzio, 2007), democratisation has, in any event, become the keyword for debates around post-conflict governance – and this was not the case two or three decades ago. Indeed this ‘democratic entitlement’ is also increasingly supported by an emerging body of international law (Fox, 2003). Liberal democracy is the underlying model, informed by the belief, as Michael Barnett (2006: 88) reminds us, that states organised along liberal-democratic principles are respectful of their societies and peaceful to their neighbours. Additionally, they are seen as more reliable partners than autocracies, as Christoph Zürcher (2011: 81) points out. But peacebuilding and democratisation specialists do not appear to be feeding off one another’s expertise sufficiently in order to generate the type of long-term outcome that is supposedly aimed for (Call and Cook, 2003). Instead, for peacebuilding initiatives, democratisation often seems to be equated with speedily working towards the first post-conflict elections, a strategy that has misfired on many occasions and has even led to a recurrence of armed conflict. As Timothy D. Sisk (2008: 241) thus concludes, confronting ‘the deep dilemma between conflict management and democratisation involves designing ways in which the conflict-inducing nature of transitional processes can be mitigated such that the initial constraints upon democratisation that arise from peace imperatives can, over time, fall away as trust and legitimacy ostensibly build in the post-war period’.

This emphasis on the institutions of democratic governance has led some commentators to insist that peacebuilding is, essentially, statebuilding (Barnett and Zürcher, 2009) – a view that is also echoed in some of the contemporary donor debates.5 It is about strategic negotiations with local elites, who may see the liberal peacebuilding intervention as a threat to their power and authority, while at the same time recognising that the resources that come with it may also help consolidate their position within the emerging structures of government. But many, if not most practical peacebuilding activities occur at the sub-national or even local community level, and there is thus an inherent tension – if not even a fundamental contradiction (Chopra, 2009) – between the concrete objectives of the peacebuilder and the overall goals of democratising the state apparatus. As Susanna Campbell and Jenny H. Peterson (2013: 343) write, international statebuilding ‘threatens to eclipse efforts to build peace. In practice, statebuilding and peacebuilding have been merged into a technocratic set of projects that tend to strengthen

5 Notably the ‘Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs)’ of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, developed through the forum of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding at the occasion of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (November 2011).
the capacity of central government, not state-society relations, responsiveness or accountability’, thus often failing ‘to build either an effective state or sustainable peace’.

The focus on democratisation has led much of the liberal peacebuilding discourse to also embrace the notion of civil society (Paffenholz, 2011) – understood either as a set of societal actors and institutions that need to be strengthened in order to generate a sort of ‘contre-pouvoir’ to the (excessively intrusive) state apparatus, or as a vehicle through which to reach the local target communities in ‘bottom-up’ peacebuilding interventions. Yet the offices of local and international NGOs and other ‘grassroots’ organisations are themselves populated with members of the local elites, who may well see their involvement in an internationally-support ‘civil society’ as a convenient and effective means through which to pursue their own political agendas (Pouligny, 2005). Projects aimed at empowering local people may thus inadvertently foster social exclusion and help entrench local rivalries, thereby fraying the fragile social fabric even further. More ominously, David Chandler (2010: 371) has argued that the vocabulary of civil society, as employed in peacebuilding discourse, reproduces previous hierarchical views of race and cultural difference, but in a way that focuses on the autonomy and rationality of the post-conflict subject, rather than on the lack of such autonomy and rationality. As a result, peacebuilding interventions targeting civil society are justified as acts of empowerment and capacity-building, while actually ‘reinforcing and reinstitutionalising international hierarchies of power and evading responsibility for policy outcomes’ (Chandler, 2010: 387).

Nevertheless, Roland Paris (2010) is probably right when he claims that the scholarly debate about ‘liberal peacebuilding’ may have been overly zealous in its critical enthusiasm. In any event, the literature has so far failed to formulate a coherent alternative that is also of practical utility to decision-makers. And one constructive avenue may indeed lie in offering a more nuanced appraisal of what we mean by ‘liberalism’ (and ‘liberalisation’) in this context. Michael Barnett (2006), for instance, has argued that it may be more appropriate to speak of a ‘republican peacebuilding’ that privileges the central tenets of deliberation, constitutionalism and representation – rather than being fixed on opening up the market overnight and rolling in the proverbial ballot box. Similarly, Michael Pugh (2009) encourages us to rethink the political economy of welfare in the liberal peace framework in such a way as to capture the ‘whole of life’ potential of individuals and communities – including informal or even criminal elements that may play a significant role in welfare provision. Such reflections are also on-going in the security realm, where the acknowledgement of the community roles played by a variety of non-state ‘armed actors’ (from benign neighbourhood watch initiatives to more sinister vigilante groups, from street-corner gangs to drug cartels) constitutes one of the new frontiers of the peacebuilding debate.6

Ownership and Engagement: International Standards and Local Dynamics

How have peacebuilding scholars and practitioners sought to conceptualise, both theoretically and operationally, the ‘impact’ and ‘success’ of such interventions? How, as Charles T. Call (2008) asks, do you know peace when you see it, and how can you assess the long-term contribution of peacebuilding, as opposed to the mere short-term effect of (UN) peace

6 This debate on security provision is particularly pertinent within the context of the world’s (largely uncontrolled) urbanisation. For an overview, see Oliver Jütersonke with Keith Krause, ‘Peacebuilding in the City: Setting the Scene’, Platform Brief No. 9 (Geneva: Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2013).
operation (Sambianis, 2008)? In an institutional arena in which the local and the intervener, the donor and the recipient are enmeshed in a complex web of legal and political interactions ranging from foreign occupation and international territorial administration (Ratner, 2005) to neo-trusteeship and notions of shared sovereignty (Caplan, 2007), how can we move beyond the cynicism that peacebuilding initiatives are simply the old ‘mission civilisatrice’ in a new guise (Paris, 2002)?

As Kenneth Bush, widely known for his development of the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) tool, has repeatedly pointed out, a self-critical examination of peacebuilding practices and experiences must be a central feature of all efforts to design and implement programmes and practices in this area – for often the well-meant peacebuilding project can itself have negative peacebuilding outcomes and consequences. Bush warns of what he calls the ‘commodification of peacebuilding’, entailing initiatives that are ‘mass-produced according to blueprints that meet Northern specifications and (short-term) interests, but that appear to be only marginally relevant to or appropriate for the political, social and economic realities of war-prone societies’ (Bush, 2004: 24).

One of the reasons for this trend, as Susan L. Woodward (2013: 328) argues, is that debates about international aid to peacebuilding ‘focus almost entirely on current outcomes and proposals’, but with little knowledge about the effects of aid on peace. Indeed, there continues to be ‘insufficient evidence about the impact of international peacebuilding efforts on war-to-peace outcomes’ (Call and Cousens, 2008: 19). And in the absence of what Woodward calls a ‘political economy analysis of peacebuilding assistance’, the transformation agenda of the major donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) may well be at loggerheads with the aim of promoting peace. Such an analysis might also highlight the ways in which, as Jonathan Goodhand and Mark Sedra (2010: S78) highlight, ‘aid policies and programmes have become part of a complex bargaining game involving international actors, domestic elites, and societal groups’. In the context of the ‘contentious politics’ of ownership, how can coherent peacebuilding priorities be formulated?

One way to think about this dilemma is, of course, to advocate a more participatory approach to peacebuilding. This would involve, as Jarat Chopra and Tanja Hohe (2004) outline, providing space for local voices to be heard and for communities to be actively involved in the shaping of their political and societal institutions. But how can such a ‘bottom-up’ approach be reconciled with the institutional mindsets, constraints and decision-making repertoires of the international community, with what Roger Mac Ginty (2012) has identified as constituting a ‘technocratic turn’ in peacebuilding? The norms of peacebuilding, Mac Ginty claims, are ‘bolstered by a mutually reinforcing set of institutions to create an increasingly hegemonic system of peacebuilding that is intolerant of alternatives and creativity’ (Mac Ginty, 2012: 288). A focus on the ‘bureaucratic imperative’ underlying contemporary peace interventions can, according to Mac Ginty, go a long way towards helping us think about how certain actors rise to prominence in the peacebuilding field, and how certain activities are privileged over others.

Yet such an understanding of the routine technocracy of the international community may still leave us short of providing suggestions of how peacebuilding interventions can indeed be ‘context-sensitive’ and ‘inclusive’ processes. How can, as Timothy Donais (2009) asks, the under-conceptualised notion of ‘local ownership’ be applied in such a way that it is not perceived as yet another externally imposed idea? And how can we act upon the insight that the international community may itself be undermining local ownership, in the face of what Cedric de Coning (2013) has rightly diagnosed as a classic case of the tragedy of the commons? There
is a persistent lack of recognition’, he writes, ‘that the amount of time and energy that the new government in Somalia, and all such governments, spends on servicing the needs of their international partners contributes to instability and fragility. No doubt the government of Somalia, like every other of these so-called fragile governments, believe it can come out on top of this game, but the reality is that he who pays the piper calls the tune’ (de Coning, 2013:1; emphasis in the original).

According to David Chandler (2013), we may need to shift our reflection away from a linear understanding of peacebuilding ‘blueprints’ towards non-linear approaches that stress the importance of ‘hidden agency’ and ‘resistance’. Armed with the recognition that peacebuilding ‘is caught in a web of constituencies that have different and partly competing interests and concerns’ (Sending, 2011: 66), and in light of the fact that peacebuilding is essentially about finding ways for these conflicting views and interests to be mitigated in a non-violent and sustainable manner, perhaps the ways in which local and international stakeholders are involved in a complex system of ‘patronage and power’, to quote Ole Jacob Sending (2009) again, must be seen in a more constructive light. What such a more constructive perspective on local ‘realities’ could look like, however, continues to be the subject of much debate – and while it may indeed be true that we are not only witnessing a technocratic but also a ‘local turn’ in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), a plethora of initiatives and workshops of the ‘peacebuilding community’ bear testimony to its bewilderment in trying to find ways of thinking about how to relate the ‘international’ and the ‘local’ in a meaningful way.

One way of doing so that has caught the attention of the peacebuilding community is via the notion of ‘hybridity’. Popularised by Volker Boege et al. (2009), the notions of ‘hybrid political orders’, ‘hybrid peace governance’ (Belloni, 2012) and even ‘hybrid violence’ (Krause, 2012) have sought to make sense of a complex reality in which international and local, state and non-state, formal and informal, public and private actors, practices and institutions not only co-exist, but may well be in a variety of symbiotic relationships with one another. As Keith Krause (2012: 40) writes, it constitutes the way in which ‘peacebuilding efforts construct and reconstruct new networks of power and governance […] in which the border between external and internal is unclear and intertwined and in which top-down institution-building projects intersect with the micropolitics of local or bottom-up actors’. But like with all such fashionable phrases – ‘resilience’ is arguably another one that is currently en vogue7 – the ‘ideational and institutional bureaucratisation of liberal peace’ (Goetschel and Hagmann, 2009) ends up making the heuristic device into the very goal of peacebuilding. Confronting the ambition of using the vocabulary of hybridity to generate a ‘post-liberal form of peace’ centred around critical agency, resistance and liberation (Richmond, 2012) is hence the international peacebuilding machinery itself, which is already busy making the promotion of hybrid political orders and resilient communities into key features of its programming. There, the supposed emancipatory potential of many of such concepts rings hollow. Concepts freely move between the academic and practitioner communities, but the gaping chasm between scholarly peacebuilding debates and concrete field realities leaves much to be desired.

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*This bibliography consists of the 78 academic articles and book chapters that were selected for the four-volume Routledge compendium cited at the start of this paper. Additional references from the text are included in the footnotes.*


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**About the White Paper on Peacebuilding:** The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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Peacebuilding: A Review of the Policy Literature

Aminata Sow

Introduction

More than 20 years after the Agenda for Peace and with the 10 year anniversary of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture, this review brings together policy reports and other organisational literature, also referred to as ‘grey’ literature. The review focuses on 11 selected themes that have resonated in the policy community in recent years:

1. Governance and peacebuilding
2. Inclusiveness and peacebuilding
3. Crime and peacebuilding
4. Resilience and peacebuilding
5. Natural resources and peacebuilding
6. Evaluation and peacebuilding
7. Women and peacebuilding
8. Youth and peacebuilding
9. Business and peacebuilding
10. Statebuilding and peacebuilding
11. Development and peacebuilding

The review has been commissioned to contribute to the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The review is based on a systematic review and analysis of the online policy documents of major peacebuilding organisations, including the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP), the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, as well as different international organisations and peacebuilding organisations in the field. A brainstorm between the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP) and the author consolidated the list of key institutions, policy reports and themes within the field of peacebuilding. Based on these exchanges and further web screening, the author identified the eleven focus themes that are presented in this paper.
Given the breadth and depth of the field of peacebuilding, the review does not have the ambition of being exhaustive. Instead, it presents a selection of key policy contributions that are listed in the bibliography.

1. Governance and peacebuilding

The international peacebuilding community has rallied around a number of guiding principles, most prominently advocating for local ownership and the creation of crosscutting linkages. The notion of local ownership was most recently formalised in 2011, with the adoption of the New Deal for Engagement with Fragile States, which places ‘great emphasis on ownership, alignment with local priorities and the use of country systems’ (Weijer & Kilnes, 2012, 8). Concurrently, the UN system has also taken multiple steps in recent years to recalibrate its approach towards nurturing local ownership throughout its operations. In its publication entitled ‘Governance for Peace’, UNDP asserts its firm belief in the ‘principle of national ownership, and that this focus must be adaptable to the complex and dynamic context of fragility and conflict’ (2011, 12).

Going beyond national ownership, an increasing number of international actors, including donors, are abiding by the premise that consolidated national ownership begins first and foremost at the local community level and evolves upwards to create binding linkages with the national, regional and ultimately international level (Odendaal, 2010).

Local Peace Committees (LPCs) are the main mechanisms through which local ownership is actively promoted and diffused as part of broader peace architectures.1 Endorsed by the UNDP as an optimal ‘architecture for building peace at the local level’, these structures have proven to yield valuable results towards achieving sustainable peace and have therefore received significant attention from the mid-1990s onwards (Odendaal, 2010, 8). It is important to note that LPCs vary widely with respect to the degree to which they rely on informal mechanisms. A 2011 UNDP study seeking to analyse LPCs’ contributions to the process of peacebuilding chooses to focus on formal LPCs, as they allow for a clearer illustration of the potential they hold as an ‘interface between local peacebuilding and formal national processes […]’ (UNDP, 2011). Indeed, the proven strength of formal LPCs is their ability to reach out and integrate a broad range of relevant local stakeholders within a conflict resolution process, and in turn, to encase this functional microcosm within wider regional and national governance structures (UNDP, 2011, 89). Given that ‘local and national conflict systems are both interconnected and distinct’, LPCs provide an ideal structure to encourage and promote active local ownership of the peacebuilding process, all the while allowing for the creation of crucial linkages with the broader peace architecture (Odendaal, 2010, 6).

Achieving peace that builds on genuine local ownership requires working both from the top-down and from the bottom-up (UNDP, 2011, 90). LPCs stand to fulfil this self-reinforcing approach through their interactions with the overarching national peace architecture. Successful examples include Ghana and Sierra Leone, whereby LPCs have managed to diffuse their knowhow and best practices upwards within the regional and national peace architectures. Conversely, the broader national architecture has successfully bolstered their mandates by facilitating access to national resources and the provision of technical capacities through a coordinating body – often itself externally supported by international architectures, such as that of the UN System or other actors (Odendaal, 2010, 15-17). LPCs thereby represent an ideal

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1 An umbrella title used to designate ‘an inclusive committee operating at sub-national level (a district, municipality, town or village) […] Generally speaking, an LPC includes all participants, emphasises dialogue, promotes mutual understanding, builds trust and creates constructive problem-solving and joint action to prevent violence’ (Odendaal, 2010, 7).
mechanism through which to promote local ownership while creating the necessary linkages for informed, comprehensive and sustainable strategies. However, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the formation of linkages represents a double-edged sword with regards to preserving the integrity of local ownership. The emergence of an effective peacebuilding system therefore remains highly contingent on local will and agency not being dwarfed or coopted by national or international structures.

The systematic emergence of linkages and joint strategies in tackling the peacebuilding mandate is crucial to go forward. In its report on ‘International Support to Peace Processes’, the OECD highlights ‘inadequate co-operation among mediation, security and development actors’ as an important shortcoming that requires immediate action (2012, 11). Such a limitation is clearly detrimental to results on the ground, as concerted action by relevant actors is more likely to bring about a pooling of resources, capacity, skills and know-how, thereby avoiding or mitigating the likelihood of ineffective management and the duplication of tasks. Much in line with the rest of the literature, the OECD recommends nurturing ‘strong linkages with other tools in the international community’s repertoire to address the structures and incentives that fuel and support violence’ (OECD, 2012, 23). A report assessing future prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) also issues recommendations for greater coordination and integration. Namely, it calls for the PBA to be more proactive both in its relationship with other UN bodies – specifically the UN Security Council in order to develop policies pertaining to the development and security nexus – but also with the research community at large (McAskie, 2010, 23-25).

2. Inclusiveness and peacebuilding

The notion of inclusiveness features prominently across recent policy recommendations, particularly when it comes to political settlements. The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) defines a political settlement as ‘a dynamic bargain (primarily between elites) on the distribution of power and resources that is subject to changes and re-adjustments over time’ (Castillejo, 2014, 1). Against the backdrop of a growing number of relevant stakeholders within peacebuilding processes – be they international, regional, state or non-state actors – the question of how inclusive political settlements should be to achieve sustainability acquires particular relevance. This is especially so in light of ‘increasing evidence that inclusiveness in political settlements is a critical requirement for a sustainable exit from conflict’ (Castillejo 2014, 1). An OECD report echoes this requirement for inclusiveness by highlighting Pruitt and Thomas’2 recommendation that participants in a peace process should ideally ‘be a representative microcosm of the entire conflict system’ (2012, 39). Despite the fact that this consensus is becoming entrenched across recent literature, considerable debate remains around what type of inclusiveness is desirable.

One can denote a clear distinction between horizontal and vertical inclusion. Horizontal inclusion refers to the inclusion of various key elite groups viewed as having the potential to be spoilers of peace and stability. Vertical inclusion refers to efforts to strengthen the ‘state-society contract’ by ensuring that both the interests of elites and the broader population are represented. NOREF finds that actors vested primarily in international security tend to prioritise horizontal inclusion as a strategic means of preventing conflict recurrence, whereas vertical inclusion falls more in line with the development agenda in light of its democratic underpinnings (Castillejo, 2014, 1). While

the peacebuilding mandate undoubtedly favours the latter from a normative standpoint, it is important to acknowledge that at times the swiftest means of quelling conflict-fuelling grievances might be through engaging key stakeholders horizontally, despite reduced prospects of sustainability. Irrespective of the approach taken, a fundamental requirement is that the political process be locally owned and led, with the OECD emphasising that ‘[…] the decision of who should participate belongs to the participants (who should own the process) which often equates to the armed groups involved directly in the conflict. It is not a decision that should be imposed by external actors or by the mediator’ (2012, 39). That is not to say, however, that support offered by external actors should not be informed as much as much possible by guiding principles conducive to effective and sustainable peace. One such principle upholds civil society participation as crucial, in light of the growing realisation that it represents a ‘powerful force that can mobilise either to escalate conflict or facilitate its resolution’ (Barnes, 2006, 21).

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States paved the way for core governance principles of peacebuilding and also defined the beginning of a paradigm which puts civil society at its core (Bächtold, Keller and Van Sluijs, 2013, 2). This represents a positive step forward in that there has been a long-identified policy gap in recognising and enabling people as agents of security. For instance, a 2006 Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) publication highlights the need to challenge the state’s ‘security monopoly’, which results in civil society organisations (CSOs) being perceived ‘either as irrelevant or as a threat to the sovereign prerogatives of states’ (Barnes, 6). The 2011 New Deal therefore marks a departure from this and has been hailed as embodying the necessary framework for CSOs to entrench themselves as active stakeholders at various stages of peace processes. This is particularly so in light of the Deal’s first Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal (PSG) calling for ‘legitimate politics and inclusive political settlements’, as well as its recognition that ‘open and constructive relations between state and society’ are vital to any statebuilding and peacebuilding process (Bächtold, Keller and Van Sluijs, 2013, 2). This is not to invalidate previous efforts made to recognise civil society and its comparative advantages as valuable. Nevertheless, contributions subsequent to Busan are unprecedented in their comprehensive approach and the fact that they account for fragile contexts, thereby making them more tailored to the current global state.

CSOs currently enjoy an unprecedented opportunity to assert themselves as central peacebuilding stakeholders at every stage of the peacebuilding process. GPPAC provides a comprehensive overview of the roles and activities that CSOs can take on as part of the peacebuilding process. These include, among others: structural prevention by alleviating social tensions; early crisis response through early warning systems and mobilising political will for response; peacemaking through facilitating inclusive dialogue, mediation and negotiations processes; and, finally, post-settlement peacebuilding by facilitating rehabilitation and contributing to transitional justice processes (Barnes, 2006, 28). Interpeace further locates civil society at the centre of constitution-making and constitutional reform processes in conflict-stricken contexts (Brandt et al., 2011). While civil society’s potential is enormous when it comes to consolidating peace, it is important to highlight that the success of bringing its contributions forward is highly contingent on the prevailing political and administrative culture (GPPAC, 2007). GPPAC highlights that this dynamic holds true at the domestic level but also at the international one where external actors can sometimes dictate the environment and conditions faced by CSOs (2007, 16). As such, depending on the political will and receptiveness characterising a

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3 GPPAC notably highlights the rise of civil society as a concept throughout the 1990s and important recognition milestones, such as the UNSG 2001 report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict (S/2001/574), UNSC Resolution 1366 (2001) and UNGA Resolution 57/337 (2003) (Barnes, 2007, 21).
given society, the relationship that develops between the government and civil society can be one of cooperation, cooptation or confrontation (GPPAC, 2007, 17). Given that the implementation of the New Deal rests on the principle of mutual accountability between governments and civil society, a priority should be to identify and harness factors conducive to a cooperative rapport between governments and CSOs (Bächtold, Keller and Van Sluijs, 2013, 2).

**Important structural obstacles still stand in the way for civil society inclusion and participation in peacebuilding processes.** First and foremost, a report assessing future prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture notes the lack of entry point mechanisms for civil society within this very structure, arguing that ‘there remain real difficulties in bringing civil society into an intergovernmental body […]’ (McAskie, 2010, 12). As the UNPBA remains a prime and widely recognised mechanism through which to push the peacebuilding mandate forward, there is an urgent need for reform in order to make it a more effective interface between governments at the international level and global civil society. A European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) publication also highlights a donor’s lack of capacity development support for CSOs located in the South, arguing that this would render them more autonomous, enabling them to formulate their own agendas and undertake their own policy analyses for instance (2012, vii). Interpeace confirms the existence of ‘critical capacity gaps’ in reporting the results of a civil society survey conducted regarding the UN Review of International Civilian Capacities (2010, 7). It further identifies the failure – and at times conscious reluctance – to draw on the local expertise of civil society in conflict-affected societies as a shortcoming to be remedied (Interpeace, 2010, 3).

3. Crime and peacebuilding

**Armed violence and organised crime remain largely unaddressed by the peacebuilding mandate, due in part to conceptual and definitional challenges.** The landmark World Development Report 2011 (WDR) provided valuable insight into the fact that these dynamics are increasingly starting to blur, finding for example that a quarter of today’s world population lives in ‘fragile and conflict-affected states or in countries with very high levels of criminal violence’ (World Bank, 2011, 5). What is broadly referred to as ‘criminal violence’ can be disaggregated into various distinct, but related and often overlapping, categories, including armed violence and organised crime – the focus of this review. Some important definitional challenges exist in pinpointing exactly what is encompassed under each term, but the OECD broadly defines armed violence as ‘the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm’ (2011, 2). Organised crime, as a reference point, is regarded by the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNCTOC) as ‘a series of illegal activities that are perpetrated for profit by a group of three or more persons’. Such activities include drug trafficking, human trafficking, migrant smuggling and environmental resource trafficking, etc. (International Alert, 2013, 4). A conference report by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform highlights the specific challenge met in trying to define organised crime, given that ‘the characteristics and significance of organised crime are closely related to the historical trajectory and the socio-cultural, economic, environmental and geopolitical context’ (GPP, 2013, 2). This implies a dynamism and variance, which is difficult to tackle adequately.

There are concerted calls across recent literature for peacebuilding policy to account for the dynamic nature of armed violence and organised crime, and to address their respective interactions with conflict in contexts of fragility. Indeed, the 2011 edition of the Global Burden of Armed Violence argued that conventional distinctions, such as the one made between conflict
and criminal violence – the former is deemed to be politically motivated while the latter is
deemed to be economically motivated – are growing increasingly obsolete and are in fact
misleading, as they tend to suggest that given forms of violence fit neatly into various categories
(Geneva Declaration, 2011, 1). International Alert further finds that ‘shifts in the constituents,
landscapes, cycles and dynamics of violence have taken place’, however, they have yet to be
fully recognised, particularly from a policy-making standpoint. This reality has led to calls for a
more proactive political will to embrace what is being referred to as ‘21st century violence’
(2013, 6-7). Moreover, we are at a particularly timely and relevant juncture to address the nexus
between conflict, armed violence and organised crime in light of the post-2015 agenda context
and the New Deal’s aftermath currently playing out. For instance, a 2013 publication analysing
the New Deal’s Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals (PSGs) argues that phenomena such as
organised crime have ‘real potential to perpetuate the very fragility we are trying to address
through the New Deal, PSGs and numerous other interventions’ (International Alert, 32). This
gap in the current policy framework is further underscored by an OECD assessment that ‘the
international toolkit for dealing with the linkages between, and diversity of, violent conflict and
organised violence needs to be even more sophisticated’ (2012, 19). As such, the task of
unpacking and addressing these linkages reflects a current and urgent policy need that is likely
to remain a central feature on the agenda in the foreseeable future.

**There are a number of valuable policy recommendations regarding how peacebuilding can
effectively contend with armed violence and organised crime.** In light of Latin America being
the only region in the world where lethal violence has increased between 2000 and 2010, many
current findings are drawn from case studies based on this region (UNDP, 2013, 1). This is the case
for UNDP’s Citizen Security report, which finds that progress ‘does not stem from a single isolated
policy or action, but from a multi-sectoral approach and a series of policies including preventive
measures, institutional reforms, sufficient public investment, changes in the relationship between
the State and communities, broad and sustained political will [...]’ (2013, viii). This is in line with
prior world-scale findings that the most successful programmes were comprehensive and multi-
sectoral in nature, and relied on a wide range of violence prevention and reduction strategies
(Bellis et al., 2010, 6). Inclusiveness has also been found to be a decisive factor for success. The
Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Geneva Call (2011)
emphasise this by highlighting the importance of taking into account armed non-state actors
(NSAs) in light of their demonstrated potential to act as spoilers to a peace process. Such policy
recommendations point to the fact that increased communication, coordination and
concerted action between peacebuilding and development actors will be a fundamental
requirement for effectiveness in going forward.

**Community-based approaches have also been highlighted as important means of promoting
peace and social cohesion in fragile contexts.** For instance, the Governance and Social
Development Resource Centre (GSD) finds that ‘since public institutions are often weak in
conflict and fragile settings, community-based approaches can be used to re-connect the state
with its citizens and to strengthen local governance’. Similarly, UNDP’s report, Reducing Armed
Violence, also recommends making use of ‘comprehensive community-based programmes’ as
well as building on already existing local mechanisms to undertake various key peacebuilding
efforts, such as prevention initiatives, social intervention or law enforcement (2011, 6).
4. Resilience and peacebuilding

Despite its growing popularity in policy circles, the concept of resilience and what it specifically refers to remains particularly tricky to define. Initially used in fields as diverse as mechanical engineering, ecology and psychology, the term has been appropriated by peacebuilding actors and, in its simplest terms, refers to the ‘capacity to ‘bounce back’ after a disturbance or a shock’ (Jütersonke & Kartas, 2012, 2). This aptitude is generally articulated in terms of the emergence of a whole system rather than a single occurrence. Indeed, a GPP publication highlights the fact that ‘most studies on resilience focus on the ability of systems to cope, adapt and reorganise in response to a chronic challenge’ (Menkhaus, 2013, 4). A European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) publication confirms this wide-set approach when it argues that the concept of resilience is ‘rooted in complex adaptive systems thinking’ (Weijer, 2013, 2). Oliver Jütersonke and Moncef Kartas bring an important qualification to this whole-systems lens, however, highlighting that it is not always necessarily the entire system that undergoes adaptation: ‘at times it is only a sub-system that transforms in order for the system as a whole to adapt’ (2012, 2). As such, it is quite evident that despite being increasingly used by practitioners across the international cooperation field, the concept of resilience is not easily defined or delineated and lends itself to multiple interpretations.

This definitional ambiguity is underscored by the fact that beyond the blurry boundaries of the term, it is equally challenging to determine what (i.e. the object or subject) ‘resilience’ refers to. Indeed, Weijer poses the following central questions: “But whose resilience is it? To cope with what? […] Are we talking about the resilience of state institutions, of state-society relations, or of society itself?” (2013, iii). The report concludes that there is no right or wrong answer to these questions, thereby confirming the broad application of the concept. In seeking to narrow down resilience’s implications for peacebuilding, Menkhaus outlines four valuable and streamlined ways to conceive the relationship between resilience to conflict and change: 1) resilience as the ability to maintain a positive peace; 2) resilience as the ability to manage the process of transforming a negative peace into a positive peace; 3) resilience as a quest for status quo ante bellum; and, finally, 4) resilience as transformation (2013, 4-5). While it is evident that resilience still spans across a wide range of dimensions, even when it is considered with regards to a specific interactions, the above pathways show that it is possible to unpack and make use of the concept in an organised and coherent manner.

The appropriation potential of resilience as a concept can be seen in the manner in which a handful of organisations have embraced it and created a specific vision or interpretation around it. For instance, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has succeeded in adopting the concept and creating a comprehensive approach drawing on it (IFRC, 2012). Doing so has involved explicitly defining key traits characterising resilient communities, among different criteria, as well as establishing a set of core principles that the IFRC considers conducive to resilience (IFRC, 2012). Such principles include respecting local ownership, conducting comprehensive cross-sector assessments throughout planning and implementation phases, and adopting a long-term perspective (IFRC, 2012, 14-15). Similarly, in its report entitled ‘Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile Situations’, the OECD chooses to define the opposite of fragility not as stability but as resilience (2011, 12). As such, although questions still remain as to what exactly resilience embodies, the lack of definitional clarity surrounding it may also be considered an advantage in that it enables actors to seize it and build upon it constructively. Another notable opportunity highlighted by a GPP publication is that ‘it shifts the focus from deficit to strengths’ (Jütersonke & Kartas, 2012, 4). departing from
an entrenched tendency to outline the flaws and shortcomings of a given object of study, it allows us to engage in a reflexive and productive exercise of identifying factors contributing to strength. Finally, perhaps a key takeaway from the concept of resilience is that it represents an illustration of the fact that local systems are able to function and develop their coping mechanisms without external intervention or assistance.

5. Natural resources and peacebuilding

There is an increasing consensus that effective and sustainable peacebuilding must take the natural resource dimension into account. Recent research shows that at least 40% of intrastate conflicts have had a link to natural resources over the past 60 years (Matthew et al., 2009, 8). Further, resource scarcity and environmental neglect have been shown to directly affect occurrences of conflict. Indeed, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) finds that ‘familiar sources of conflict are being amplified by environmental stress’ (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 4). Conversely, it is increasingly understood that conflict can have significant and detrimental consequences for the environment. A UNEP report argues that these consequences can be categorised along three main pathways: direct (the immediate destruction and environmental degradation caused by conflict), indirect (understood to include the disruption of normal socio-economic patterns as well as the delivery of basic services) and institutional (whereby state institutions and policy-making mechanisms are disrupted, often resulting in poor management and a rise in illegality) (Matthew et al., 2009, 15). In light of such a wide-reaching and potentially destabilising impact, there is an urgent need for the international peacebuilding community to pay closer attention to the interaction between the environment, natural resources and conflict. Most importantly, policy-makers must incorporate appropriate strategies allowing for this nexus to become an operational reality rather than an abstract concept.

The difficulty in devising practical and actionable measures to firmly locate natural resources and the environment on the peacebuilding agenda lies in the complexity of the interplay between these elements. The growing consensus that their interrelatedness can no longer be ignored has failed to materialise into concerted action due to challenges met in proving causation. For instance, IISD highlights that researchers tend to conclude that environmental change ‘is only one stress among many affecting conflict and security, and that its precise role in the chain of causation is hard to specify’ (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 6). UNEP echoes this, calling the relationship between natural resources, the environment and conflict a ‘multi-dimensional’ and complex one (Matthew et al., 2009, 8). The same report nonetheless identifies three principal pathways through which the impact that natural resources and the environment bear on conflict can be understood: 1) contributing to the outbreak of conflict; 2) financing and sustaining conflict; and 3) undermining peacemaking (Matthew et al., 2009, 8). While this paper is not exhaustive and does not explore every causal pathway, it nonetheless highlights that both natural resources and the environment stand to shape and often worsen conflict during every phase. Peacebuilding policy will therefore be most effective if it accounts for these dimensions not only once conflict has broken out but also as part of prevention and recovery strategies.

It is important to highlight the positive ways in which natural resources and the environment can be harnessed towards sustainable peacebuilding, particularly with respect to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). UNEP finds that natural resources can significantly

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4 This occurs, among other dynamics, by ‘yielding limited access to productive resources, inequitable wealth-sharing and potential risks of land disputes’ (UNDP-UNEP, 2013, 8).
strengthen peacebuilding efforts – directly or indirectly – through supporting economic recovery, developing sustainable livelihoods and contributing to dialogue, cooperation and confidence-building (Matthew et al., 2009, 19). A joint UNDP-UNEP report also finds that effective resource management has a central role to play, particularly within the field of DDR (UNDP-UNEP, 2013). Indeed, while the benefits of sound resource management can be reaped at every stage of a given conflict, it appears that during the recovery phase, these have deeper and wider-reaching consequences. Specifically, the report underscores that natural resources play a role beyond economic recovery, being ‘important factors for social reintegration and reconciliation, as well as for overcoming gender biases […]’ (UNDP-UNEP, 2013, 8). In actual practice, however, it would appear that these potential linkages with the DDR mandate are not exploited due to an entrenched tendency to consider natural resource management an issue to be addressed at later stages of the recovery phase (UNDP-UNEP, 2013, 50). DDR programmes, which are often ‘politically sensitive processes defined by specific timelines and budgets’, therefore tend not to coordinate or seek synergy with the much broader field of natural resource management (UNDP-UNEP, 2012, 12). Consequently, a key recommendation issued across the literature is to incorporate environmental considerations from early planning stages of any given recovery programme so as to optimally harness existing linkages.

Within the field of natural resource management, conservation appears to be a key area from which peacebuilding stands to benefit, specifically with water as a strategic pathway. An IISD publication studies the role that conservation stands to play in achieving long-lasting peace by seeking to answer the following question: ‘Could investment in environmental conservation […] offset funds now spent on peacekeeping and humanitarian relief, rather than waiting to address their consequences?’ (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 5). Its answer is a decisive yes, with findings that better conservation practices contribute to peace and stability, in turn fostering development and social justice. The report further calls for planned conservation to continue during times of conflict and during post-conflict reconstruction, which is when it most often becomes neglected (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 5). The Environmental Change and Security Programme (ECSP) finds that water management and preservation is a particularly ‘productive pathway for confidence building, cooperation and, arguably, conflict prevention’, with cooperative incidents outnumbering conflicts by more than two to one between 1945 and 1999 (Carius, Dabelko, & Wolf, 2004, 60). Efforts must therefore be made for these consequential findings to inform and enhance peacebuilding policy agendas. Moreover, it is important to locate women at the forefront of strategic measures pertaining to natural resource management and conservation. A recent publication focusing on women and natural resources finds that they have a vital role to play in building peace given that they are most often the primary users and managers of natural resources (UNEP, UN Women, UNDP & PBSO, 2013, 5). Nevertheless, the same report concurrently points out that women ‘remain largely excluded from owning land, benefiting from resource wealth or participating in decision-making about resource management’, thereby underscoring the urgency of a paradigmatic shift towards their inclusion (UNEP, UN Women, UNDP & PBSO, 2013, 5).

6. Evaluation and peacebuilding

The current debate surrounding impact and evaluation assessments is marked by a lack of consensus, as well as accuracy and legitimacy concerns. This is not to deny that strides have been made towards refining current practices and methods. For instance, the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) finds that ‘in the last five to ten years, the field has made significant improvements in developing tools and guidelines on how to measure the impact of
peacebuilding programmes’ (2011, 8). Nevertheless, the same report goes on to identify important obstacles that it argues undermine both the legitimacy and accuracy of impact and evaluation assessments relating to peacebuilding.

Challenges faced are structural as well as methodological and appear to be reinforced by an entrenched tendency to favour a ‘results-orientation’ framework for evaluation and impact assessments. The main structural impediment to stem from this emphasis on results is a tendency to prioritise ‘upward accountability’ over ‘downward accountability’, the latter being in principle the cornerstone of any peacebuilding endeavour (Dittli & Servaes, 2013, 11). This in turn inevitably conditions assessments on the ground, in that the yardstick for success becomes the results that are aligned with donors’ preferences and end-goals, rather than sustainable change towards peace. AfP finds that this dynamic is all the more limiting given that donors tend to be risk-averse, thereby constraining implementers to ‘safe and proven programmes’ rather than the freedom to devise innovative and context-tailored initiatives (AfP, 2011, 8).

The emphasis on measuring for results – or ‘obsessive measurement disorder’⁵ – that currently characterises many international peacebuilding initiatives raises important questions about where accountability lies. A joint Swisspeace and FriEnt report summarises this dilemma through the following question: ‘where and how do we actually learn in safe and self-critical ways when monitoring and evaluation are tweaked to serve predominantly upward accountability needs?’ (Dittli & Servaes, 2013, 11). An encouraging aspect of this unresolved status quo is the fact that practitioners themselves seem to be at the forefront of this line of questioning. The Peacebuilding Evaluation Project (PEP)⁶ highlights as a main finding that both donors and implementers are dissatisfied with the current state of evaluation, with both sets of actors tellingly rating it a four out of a possible ten (AfP, 2011, 8). It therefore appears that accountability – affecting in turn the integrity and legitimacy of peacebuilding operations on the ground – is a salient and yet unresolved contention point of the current debate regarding evaluation and impact assessment.

The general dissatisfaction with current evaluation practices also extends to a methodological standpoint, whereby there is considerable debate as to which tools, indicators and other such means of assessment are most effective and accurate. Interpeace identifies main shortcomings as comprising measurement issues (specifically the use of indicators), scarce resources, the normative aspect of values and definitions ascribed to peacebuilding, blurry causality and attribution mechanisms, the discrepancy between theory and implementation of a given project, and finally power relationships⁷ that may hinder and complicate evaluation efforts (Menkhaus, 2004, 4-9). Such issues are compounded by a general lack of accepted best practices, despite the long-standing existence of evaluation and impact assessments (Corlazzoli & White, 2013, 6). The UK Department for International Development (DFID) further finds that ‘perhaps one of the most common critiques of programme design, monitoring and evaluation processes and tools is their linear nature, which some view as incompatible with non-linear social change’ (Corlazzoli & White, 2013, 6). As such, there is an urgent need to fine tune and tailor evaluation practices to the precise end goal of peacebuilding. Not doing so not only inherently limits the potential for success, but may also be detrimental, as supported by the AfP’s statement that ‘evaluations have very high stakes – even dire consequences’ (2011, 15).

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⁶ A forum for dialogue between donors and implementers.
⁷ These include power dynamics between ‘donor and agency, headquarter and field, project and local community’ (p. 8).
Indicators hold a central place in the methodological debate surrounding evaluation, with recent literature suggesting that increasing efforts are being made to devise tailored and accurate tools. Interpeace summarises the underlying challenge by stating that because post-conflict situations vary widely, there is little ‘prospect for developing a bundle of universal indicators for peacebuilding […]. Yet most agree that post-conflict settings are not so unique as to defy comparison or generalisation […].’ (Menkhaus, 2004, 10). In a recent publication, Saferworld unpacks the way in which global as well as local indicators each stand to play an important role in evaluation. While they inscribe themselves within a one-size-fits-all approach, it is found that global indicators are valuable tools when they are limited to ‘genuinely universal key issues’, in that they provide clarity, simplicity and a common measure that fosters a willingness to perform well among counterparts (Saferworld, 2013, 2). A practical embodiment of this is the Globally-Accepted Indication (GAIN) initiative, which was launched in 2008 by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and has produced 18 relevant peacebuilding indicators (CRS, 2010, i). On the other hand, Saferworld also makes the case that local indicators allow decision-making powers to rest with the most local – and often most recognised and competent – body; above all, they take into account the specificity and uniqueness of challenges faced in each given context (2013, 2). As such, a crucial task currently facing the international peacebuilding community is to engage in the right balancing act between these approaches so as to fine-tune evaluation.

7. Women and peacebuilding

Policy measures seeking to address the specific vulnerabilities that women face in the context of violence and conflict have mostly been limited to sexual violence. In his report on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) highlights that while attention has increasingly been focused on conflict-related sexual violence, there is a need for ‘greater attention to be paid to the full spectrum of security threats faced by women and girls’ (UNGA, 2010, 2). These threats include, among others, a higher likelihood of forced displacement than that faced by men, trafficking, exploitation, sexual slavery and increased incidences of domestic violence (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Although there is increasing policy will to tackle these issues, effectively countering such forms of violence has proven challenging and results have been marginal (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002, viii). Notable policy gaps have been identified across a spectrum spanning from the areas of prevention, participation, protection, peacebuilding and recovery (UNGA, 2010). Such findings point towards an urgent need to find and adopt actionable means in order to locate women firmly within the peacebuilding agenda.

The difficulty in devising adequate measures to address the various challenges faced by women in conflict settings might stem from the fact that despite their unique social position, they share common characteristics with the rest of the population. Indeed, the UNSG report on women’s participation finds that ‘in their diversity, conflict-affected women mirror populations at large’; it further finds that women’s post-conflict needs align with the five priorities outlined in the 2009 UNSG Report on Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict8 (UNGA, 2010, 5). As such, there is an inherent challenge in targeting women’s essential needs in situations of conflict, all while acknowledging and upholding their particular status in such situations. This policy

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8 These are: (a) safety and security, including justice and respect for the rule of law; (b) confidence in the political process, through both inclusive dialogue and post-conflict elections; (c) access to basic services, such as water and education; (d) a functioning public administration to manage government funds and public records, at a minimum; and (e) economic revitalisation, notably, employment creation and infrastructural improvements.
shortcoming is complicated by the fact that women most often do not fit neatly into one category defined by gender: they may be widows, disabled, ex-combatants or part of marginalised religious minorities (UNGA, 2010, 5). The literature suggests that a holistic and multidimensional approach to gender therefore is most adequate. International Alert’s ‘gender-relational’ approach is one example of this as ‘it examines the interplay between gender and other identity markers, such as age, social class, sexuality, disability, ethnic or religious background, marital status or urban/rural setting’ (Myrttinen et al., 2014, 7). Encouraging the systematic adoption of similar broadened perspectives is likely to lead to better-targeted and sustainable programmes.

Beyond the need to identify and emphasise women-specific vulnerabilities resulting from conflict, it is primordial to recognise and uphold women as key stakeholders within peace processes. The shift from a limited depiction of women as victims of conflicts to a broader recognition of their positive agents for peace lacks momentum. While there have been notable efforts in this direction, current policy stops short of making this an operational reality. A significant milestone was achieved in 2000 with the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1325 and voices recognising women’s importance in preserving a cohesive social fabric have grown louder over the past decade (UNGA, 2010, 2). Despite this, however, UN Women estimates that ‘fewer than 3 percent of signatories to peace agreements have been women and that women’s participation in peace negotiations averages less than 8 percent’ for assessed peace processes (Norville, 2011, 3). Taking stock of the progress made thus far, the literature generally finds that the international community has come short of moving towards a remedial action mode, despite its diagnosis of exclusionary practices towards women as regards to peacebuilding processes.

The way forward to entrench the unique vantage point held by women with regards to sustainable peace must go beyond the immediate circumstances of conflict. Women are extremely valuable actors when it comes to early warning systems for instance, as they are often aware of key information such as the location of arms caches, transportation routes and the social changes triggered by influxes of such weapons (UN Women, 2012, 4). A UN Women report therefore finds that ‘by overlooking female stakeholders, early warning systems were missing women’s potential contribution to more comprehensive information and responses’ (2012, 5). Beyond occurrences of violence, the 2010 UNSG Report finds that women’s participation must extend to the political process, arguing that nurturing a ‘critical mass’ of women officials is an imperative (UNGA, 2010, 7). Women must especially be empowered to promote the rule of law, given that ‘marginalisation is exacerbated when law and custom combine to prevent women from gaining an effective voice in political forums’ (UNGA, 2010, 7). Such a dynamic in turn undermines confidence in the political process, a fundamental requirement for sustainable peace.

Until the vital roles that women stand to play and contribute to peace processes are acknowledged and harnessed, peacebuilding is likely to remain an incomplete endeavor. The UNSG’s report on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding finds that their exclusion from designing peace agreements and recovery frameworks leads to a vicious cycle wherein gender inequalities as well as women’s insecurity are perpetuated (UNGA, 2010, 4). The importance of encouraging women’s participation for effective and sustainable peacebuilding is best

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9 Calling for ‘equal participation by women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction’ (UNSG’s Report on Women’s Participation, p.2).
summarised by the US Institute of Peace’s (USIP) brief on the role of women in global security, when it asserts that ‘half of the world’s population cannot make a whole peace’ (Norville, 2011, 1).

8. Youth and peacebuilding

Despite 1.2 billion youths comprising 18 percent of the world’s population, ‘the potential contribution and inclusion of young people to effective peacebuilding has received little attention and support’ (Subgroup on Youth Participation, 2014, 3). This finding is supported across the literature, with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) highlighting that to date, and particularly within the UN, no specific policy framework regarding the themes of youth, peace and security has been put forward (UNOY, 2013b, 15). While the General Assembly and Security Council have adopted a number of resolutions addressing the issue, such documents tend to resemble ‘ambitious wishlists’ rather than establishing clear and practical recommendations. They are further often limited to regional or country-specific dynamics (UNOY, 2013b, 5). There is therefore an urgent need for policy to tackle the nexus between peacebuilding and global youth, particularly in light of ‘their unique vulnerability to both voluntary and involuntary military recruitment’ (UNOY, 2013b, 1).

Sustainably entrenching youth as an integral part of the peacebuilding agenda entails a redefinition of their role and importance as agents of peace. Indeed, the conception of youth and of the role they stand to play in peacebuilding is limited to a few rigid scenarios. These tend to revolve around the premise of the ‘youth bulge’, or the idea that disproportionately large youth cohorts relative to the population bear a strong correlation with the occurrence of violence (USAID, 2005, 3). A recent UNOY report underscores this idea, arguing that the perception of youth in relation to violence and conflict is often a dichotomous one, with them being depicted either as ‘causal or recipient agents’, rather than positive agents for peace (UNOY, 2013a, 1). A trend in the recent literature is to caution against such reductionist representations and call for a move towards nurturing the positive dividends that youth stands to contribute to peace processes. USAID’s report, ‘Youth and Conflict’, situates itself within this current, arguing that ‘when youth are shielded from social and economic stresses, and can participate in decisions that affect their lives, they are more likely to pursue peaceful change’ (2005, 5).

The successful implication of youth in peacebuilding processes requires a comprehensive approach going beyond immediate conflict dynamics in order to address socio-economic concerns. This is in line with the recommendations issued by the UN-led Subgroup on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding. Specifically, it argues that successful policy must firmly rest on the adoption of multiple approaches, drawing from human rights, economic, socio-political and sociocultural components (Subgroup on Youth Participation, 2014). The fact that this wide-ranging framework closely overlaps with the development agenda validates the relevance of calls issued for youth and peacebuilding to occupy a prime position on the post-2015 agenda. Across the literature, there is a consensus that international actors must capitalise on the momentum provided by the upcoming review of the Millennium Development Goals to make a case for the importance of placing youth at the heart of peacebuilding. For instance, UNOY’s latest report urges Member States to establish a goal on peace and security recognising young

10 Among which the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965) and the Resolution based on the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth (2011).
people as specific stakeholders. It simultaneously calls for mainstreaming youth and peacebuilding ‘among all future goals, targets and indicators in the post-2015 development agenda’ (A Space for Peace, 2013, 4). The current international conjuncture with the approaching review of the development agenda therefore presents a strategic opportunity to assert the importance of youth as agents of peacebuilding. It would further allow a mutually reinforcing collaboration between the peacebuilding and development mandates, thereby facilitating the adoption of a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to the issue.

A specific tool being highlighted as a means of securing active and positive youth involvement in peacebuilding is education. The Youth and Conflict report finds that ‘an important way to avoid future conflict is to draw on the energy and capacities of youth as the leaders of tomorrow’s societies’ (USAID, 2005, 3). In its 2011 Education and Peacebuilding Report, UNICEF argues that education acts as a significant vehicle of social cohesion. It must therefore be supported at every stage of a given conflict, and most critically so in post-conflict settings (2011, 7). Indeed, a survey of selected case studies shows that education stands to have a transformative effect in post-conflict societies in the long run by yielding changes in social attitudes and values which may in turn redefine conflict (UNICEF, 2011, 7). Accordingly, one of the report’s main recommendations – echoed by UNESCO and World Bank publications – is that international donors and in particular the PBF, which has thus far only marginally supported education initiatives, increase funding towards the delivery of education services (UNICEF, 2011, 6).

9. Business and peacebuilding

Attention paid to the role of the private sector in peacebuilding and conflict resolution has grown significantly over the recent years. A Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) publication on the issue outlines three main causes for the increased prominence of this actor that has, until recently, remained largely invisible or ignored. First, the private sector is simply increasingly present and therefore impacted in situations of conflict – whether through domestic or multinational dealings. Second, it is often able to intervene in different ways than the government or other traditional parties to a conflict owing to its resources as well as its managerial and technical capabilities. Finally, we are witnessing a global trend in what is referred to as the ‘privatisation of peace’, particularly in the context of the emergence of so-called ‘fragile states’ (Tripathi & Gunduz, 2008, 16). This defining feature of the current international landscape has created an environment allowing the private sector to assert itself as an actor of significance when it comes to peacebuilding and related processes.

While it has become a rising actor in the peacebuilding universe, there is considerable debate as to what positive contributions the private sector stands to make. A USIP report points out that there has been significant research highlighting business as a cause or exacerbating factor in conflict, particularly in resource-rich countries (Forrer et al., 2012, 2). This can take place through hiring practices whereby a firm may inadvertently employ workers coming disproportionately from a particular social group; a skewed distribution of resources; the displacement of local populations; or through environmental degradation (Forrer et al., 2012, 2). A survey of the literature indicates that a clear answer to this is contingent on a number of factors. Countering this, however, is the case made in recent literature that under the right conditions and a willingness to endorse its role as a stakeholder in conflict processes, businesses can be important agents in fostering peace. Indeed, International Alert finds that ‘in view of their outwardly apolitical nature, businesses are, in theory, able to act where others sometimes cannot’. Further,
it argues that ‘the private sector may also possess unique knowledge of an economy and can produce politically un-biased information that can lead to more reliable decisions on some issues’ (Tripathi & Gunduz, 2008, 25). The literature therefore generally finds that there is an important place carved out for the business sector within peace processes. The positive contribution it stands to make however is highly contingent on its willingness to act and, most importantly, on its capacity to maintain a neutral and apolitical stance.

The potential of the business sector to be a catalyst for peace ranges across a wide spectrum, including prevention, negotiation and mediation. With regards to conflict prevention specifically, the role the business sector stands to play is multidimensional and presupposes the emergence of a whole-systems approach bringing together various elements (Ganson, 2011, 2). The GPP identifies these critical dimensions as being threefold: individual skills, organisational capabilities and inter-organisational mechanisms (Ganson, 2011, 2-3). These three dimensions must be self-reinforcing and feed off one another so that individual skills expressed through positive attitudes – particularly within management – and endorsed responsibility to assess, prevent and manage conflict together with relevant parties must be enabled and facilitated by specific organisational capacities. This capacity framework needs to be responsive enough so as to anticipate potential conflict and adapt to these conditions. It must simultaneously be able to inscribe itself within an external set of relationships often characterised by a ‘complex stakeholder environment’ (Ganson, 2011, 3). Hence, the ability of businesses to effectively carry out conflict prevention rests upon multiple pre-requirements making up the earlier mentioned whole systems approach. Alongside conflict prevention, International Alert highlights negotiation and mediation as key contributions that the private sector is able to make to peace processes. Indeed, if the condition of lack of self-interest is met, it argues that ‘businesses have been in a position to offer something of value – resources, neutrality, credibility, legitimacy, their good offices – that other actors lacked’ (Tripathi & Gunduz, 2008, 25).

Recent literature emphasises information-sharing as another promising avenue through which the business sector stands to make a difference. This would be most effectively achieved through producing independent conflict analysis based on the private sector’s specific knowledge in order to assist informed decision-making in conflict settings. However, such contributions currently remain closer to a theoretical assumption than an operational reality. CDA finds that this is mainly because ‘companies assume they have little control over conflict’, when in fact their presence on the ground – which often dates back further than that of international peacebuilding actors – provides them with access to privileged information (Zandvliet, 2010, 6). This is supported by a USIP publication that finds that businesses working in conflict settings ‘may engage in practices and risk assessments unique to the political environment’ involving ‘careful attention to the interests and concerns of customers, employees, suppliers and other stakeholders (Forrer et al., 2012, 5). This type of comparative advantage and wealth of knowledge should therefore be actively harnessed in an effort to inform and strengthen existing conflict analyses.

Notably absent from the literature is a differentiated analysis of the role businesses role with regards to when they are locally owned as opposed to when they are part of a multi- or transnational corporation (MNC or TNC). A Berghof Foundation publication states that ‘the peacebuilding role of businesses – large and small – that are locally owned, run and staffed will differ from those that answer to foreign management’ (Killick et al. 2005, 2). Indeed, local businesses are much more likely to have a ‘rooted relationship’ to the conflict which in turn creates various linkages across strata of society, as well as with political actors and other relevant stakeholders. Moreover, they tend to be more in touch with the immediate cultural,
ethnic and religious context, thereby legitimising and entrenching their role as stakeholders (Killick et al., 2005, 2). As such, although notable efforts have been made in recent years to create binding codes of conduct encouraging corporate citizenship for businesses operating in conflict-settings, it is crucial to bear in mind that a one-size-fits-all approach to engage the business sector limits the positive contributions it stands to make. Paying attention to the diversity of the business realm – be it size, sector of operation or ownership of firms – will allow for optimisation of its potential as an important stakeholder and agent within peace processes.

10. Statebuilding and peacebuilding

A successful operationalisation of the synergy between peacebuilding and statebuilding mandates has yet to materialise. Indeed, the nature of the interplay between the two and resulting implications have yet to be fully unpacked. Drawing a clear distinction, as well as establishing which types of activities befall each mandate is a complex task, particularly in light of the broad nature of both concepts and the growing number of actors in the field of international cooperation.

From a definitional standpoint, the current literature seems to converge around the peacebuilding and statebuilding definitions put forward by the UN and the OECD, respectively. According to the UN-adopted definition, peacebuilding ‘involves a range of measures targeted at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development’ (Interpeace, 2010, 4). Statebuilding, on the other hand, is defined by the OECD as ‘an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations’, with substantial emphasis being laid on the reciprocal and constructive nature of these relations between the state and society (Interpeace, 2010, 4). A survey of these definitions renders apparent that these processes are not dissociable, but must be carried out in a mutually reinforcing manner. However, despite the fact that ‘statebuilding has become a central focus of multi-dimensional peace operations in war-torn societies’, over the years, a sustainable operationalisation of the positive linkages between the two mandates has proven to be a challenge on the ground (Paris & Sisk, 2007, 1).

Limitations in harnessing the synergy between peacebuilding and statebuilding may be explained by the fact that endorsed definitions stop short of delving into the process through which these goals are best achieved. In its report drawn from consultations with civil society organisations, Interpeace finds that respondents stress the need to move away from the ‘what’ of both peacebuilding and statebuilding, and focus instead on the ‘how’. Indeed, a key take-away is that ‘peacebuilding and statebuilding processes do not follow a linear path’ (2010, 5). A high level of flexibility and adaptability is therefore essential to any strategic planning process as well as implementation. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (PBSB) report on the associated challenges echoes this, highlighting that too-narrowly defined approaches foster a compartmentalisation of the two mandates that in turn hinders successful results (2010, 46). Chief among the report’s identified challenges are the ‘weak alignment of donors behind a unified national plan’ and the ‘lack of agreement on the need to address shifting short-term and long-term priorities at the same time’ (PBSB Dialogue, 2010, 8).

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There is an important need to address the inherent tensions that arise when statebuilding is pursued alongside peacebuilding. An Overseas Development Institute (ODI) briefing paper highlights that ‘statebuilding for peace’, an expression coined by UNDP, amounts to ‘navigating an arena of contradictions’ and that these need to be recognised if they are to be effectively managed (2009, 1). First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge that statebuilding may not necessarily lead to peace, as this process can be highly exclusionary and tends to create winners and losers who will vie for competing interests (ODI, 2009, 3). Similarly, Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk (2010) find that short-term imperatives often clash with longer-term objectives. For instance, bargaining or entering into a tacit agreement with the ruling elite or other party to the conflict in order to quell immediate tensions will likely undermine the establishment of ‘depersonalised’ state institutions and broad political representation (Paris & Sisk, 2007, 4). Such findings underscore one of the OECD’s main propositions that statebuilding in fragile situations ‘is a deeply political process, and understanding the context – especially what is perceived as legitimate in a specific context – is crucial if international support is to be useful’ (OECD, 2011, 11).

The way forward must necessarily bear a strong focus on nurturing legitimate and sustainable state-society relations. This is contingent on making sure that local ownership prevails despite the fact that peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict settings are largely taken on by outside actors. Building on its consultations with civil society, Interpeace advocates for both mandates to be ‘internally-led and externally supported’. It further highlights the need to reach out beyond government institutions and actors in order to secure broad and inclusive ownership (2010, 6). There is an emerging consensus that in seeking to promote peace and fruitful state-society relations, the international community should assume the role of enablers rather than agents and above all prioritise the emergence of inclusive polities.

11. Peacebuilding and development

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention are inextricably linked to development, yet a steady and effective synergy has yet to be concretised between the two mandates. As early as 2001, an independent study commissioned by UNDP highlighted the fact that conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development were indissociable, and that the adoption of a ‘developmental perspective’ was crucial to any efforts to tackle conflict (Wood, 2001, 10). This developmental perspective on conflict recognises that conflict is a ‘normal and inescapable fact of life and development’, rather than an aberration (Wood, 2001, 10). Taking this as its premise, it upholds guiding principles such as the search for the root causes of conflict, sharing and building on knowledge among practitioners, abiding by an enabling rather than interventionist approach, and committing to taking on joint global goals together with other practitioners across silos from 2015 onwards (Wood, 2001). While this paradigm was formulated over a decade ago, it remains more relevant than ever given current efforts to entrench conflict and peacebuilding within the post-2015 development agenda in light of the looming Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review. Indeed, many of the peacebuilding voices currently trying to make themselves heard are pushing for measures and principles that fall in line with the ‘developmental perspective on conflict’, demonstrating that this approach has stopped short of becoming an operational reality over the years.

Horizontal inequalities are becoming increasingly recognised as a key driver of conflict, presenting a promising opportunity to successfully link the peacebuilding and development agendas going forward. For instance, a PBSO-Saferworld publication argues that ‘various inequalities – economic, political, cultural, gender and those related to security, justice and
social services – can heighten group grievances and lead to conflict [...]’ (Brinkman, Atree & Hezir, 2013, 1). Further, it underscores a mutually reinforcing relationship between violence and inequality whereby horizontal inequalities increase the risk of violent conflict, that may in turn worsen inequalities. In light of this dynamic, Saferworld and the PBSO call for equality to feature as a guiding principle of the post-2015 framework (Brinkman, Atree & Hezir, 2013, 1). A particularly relevant recommendation issued by the report is that equality should not only be recognised and upheld, but that this must be accompanied by a ‘credible policy response’ for governments to address horizontal inequalities effectively, 12 short of which such an initiative is unlikely to be sustainable (Brinkman, Atree L & Hezir, 2013, 15).

Conflict and its interaction with fragile contexts is another salient issue that emerges from the literature as an item of chief importance for the post-2015 agenda. Organisations such as Act Alliance argue that with the majority of the world’s poorest now residing in a small group of conflict-affected and fragile states, the nexus between peace and development is experiencing renewed relevance (2013, 2). Among its recommendations for the post-2015 framework is the need to ‘recognise and address the root causes of conflict and fragility’ through a holistic approach that takes into account the interrelated and multidimensional aspects of these issues (Act Alliance, 2013, 3). It is important to note that both the New Deal for engagement in fragile states as well as the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and State-building (IDPS) are recognised as effective tools through which to conceive conflict and fragility. Nonetheless, Act Alliance pushes for further unpacking the underlying dynamics of fragility or the ‘why’ (2013, 5). Moreover, an important contribution is the report’s emphasis on the imperative to include the most vulnerable in the process of developing and implementing the new framework. In doing so, it highlights a general need for broadening ownership past state institutions, as well as creating more inclusive and participatory mechanisms for citizens (Act Alliance, 2013, 4). In a separate policy brief, Saferworld also issues a call for the interplay between conflict and fragility to feature at the top of the post-2015 development agenda. Interestingly however, it highlights that this does not necessarily align fully with the MDGs (Saferworld, 2012, 8).

While a convergence of the peacebuilding and development agendas under the post-2015 framework would undoubtedly bolster both mandates, it is also important to bear in mind the sizeable gap currently existing between the two. There is little controversy regarding the fact that conflict and its implications are a main impediment to development, with the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda going as far as to state that ‘violence and fragility have become the largest obstacle to the MDGs’ (2012, 3). However, in crosschecking three main peacebuilding frameworks – the World Bank’s ‘World Development Report 2011’, the Institute for Economics and Peace’s ‘Structures of Peace’ and the New Deal’s ‘Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals’ (PSGs) – against the MDGs, Saferworld finds that ‘the current MDG framework does not cover the core elements of most peacebuilding frameworks’ (2012, 4). That is not to say that the MDG seeking to secure universal primary education, for instance, will not play a role towards mitigating violence or conflict; indeed, by fostering more equality, it is likely to reduce societal tensions and, in turn, the likelihood of conflict. The respective frameworks therefore remain compatible; however, fundamental factors needing to be addressed in order

12 This builds on Thania Paffenholz’s scholarship contending that it is not inequality in itself, but the manner in which it is dealt with by the government, that shapes conflict. T. Paffenholz, ‘Underdevelopment and Armed Conflict: Making Sense of the Debates’ (Unpublished Paper, 2008). Available at: http://humansecuritygateway.com/documents/ISA_underdevelopmentandarmedconflict.pdf.
to quell violence and fragility – including citizen security, justice, legitimate politics and a sound business environment, among others – are noticeably absent from the MDGs agenda (Saferworld, 2012, 4). Given that the MDGs are currently comprised of targets that tend to be more apolitical in nature than those of the peacebuilding agenda, a cautious and holistic approach will be needed to secure a successful merging of the two frameworks, all while retaining governments’ buy-in.

Concluding Remarks: The new context of peacebuilding

There is little doubt that peacebuilding as we know it today operates in a radically different environment than the one in which original efforts were born. The changing nature of violence and conflict, rapid multiplication of actors involved, growing stakes in achieving sustainable peace and the increasingly blurry line between various international cooperation mandates mean that peacebuilding is currently contending with a complex and highly dynamic reality. In its publication aiming to map the evolving boundaries of peacebuilding, the Alliance for Peacebuilding highlights three principal defining features. To begin, it finds that peacebuilding is a very large community of practice and therefore underscores the need to ‘harness intersecting efforts in a systematised and coordinated manner so as to improve results’ (2012, 7). Similarly, it highlights the fact that in the deeply divided societies in which peacebuilding takes place, ‘every intervention, from building a school to negotiation a peace agreement, can serve to reduce or augment conflict, often in unpredictable ways’. This further validates the idea that a systemic approach merging all relevant sectors is necessary to go forward. Finally, the report emphasises that a ‘conflict-sensitive lens’ must permeate all work in and around conflict environments […]. This includes abiding by principles in line with the ‘do-no-harm’ approach, as well as adopting an informed and long-term perspective through tools such as conflict mapping, analysis and monitoring.

Calls for a strategic shift towards a more systemic and concerted approach by all stakeholders are particularly relevant as two decades after the inception of peacebuilding, key drivers of violence and conflict remain neglected. This is in line with CDA Collaborative Learning Projects’ finding, based on an analysis of fifteen case studies, that what it terms ‘persistent issues’ embodying key conflict drivers remain either inadequately addressed or wholly unaddressed (2012, 9). While this is due in part to the ever-evolving nature of violence and conflict, going forward, the international community must find a way to grasp the key dynamics underlying current manifestations of both these elements and devise a cogent and systemised approach in response. It is becoming increasingly accepted that the forms of violence characterising the 21st century are driven by multiple and simultaneous drivers, and bear complex social consequences. As such, organisations, such as NOREF, call for the acceptance of these dynamics by peacebuilding actors as a long-term ‘normality’, rather than the result of particular or exceptional circumstances. It further calls for intersectoral and interdisciplinary learning, as well as policy development to form the basis of any framework devised to this effect (Adams, 2012, 1).

The emergence and nurturing of a community of learning within the field of peacebuilding is a recommendation that features increasingly prominently across the policy literature. Indeed, a Berghof publication entitled ‘Peacebuilding at a crossroads’ highlights that the move away from technical peacebuilding activities towards a more transformative peacebuilding mandate is contingent on addressing the factors hindering ‘effective networking, cooperation and learning processes’ (Fischer & Schmelzle, 2009, 6). Similarly, in its report seeking to unpack ‘Peacebuilding
The Alliance for Peacebuilding concludes that ‘the field is not a single silo of peacebuilding actors, but rather a rich mosaic of interlocking institutions whose work in concert can be far more effective than any single organisation working alone’ (2012, 44). As such, going forward, it appears as though efforts towards securing sustainable peace will be largely contingent on the emergence of a whole-system approach taking into account the interconnectedness of actors and institutions as part of peacebuilding. Simultaneously, this system must be built upon a foundation that best allows for and facilitates the sharing of knowledge, expertise and successful practices across networks.

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**About the White Paper on Peacebuilding:** The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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Risks to Peace: A Review of Data Sources

Aske Nørby Bonde and Achim Wennmann

Introduction

The White Paper on Peacebuilding calls for a broader conversation about how countries themselves can most effectively move towards sustainable peace and how the UN and other international actors can assist them in this endeavour. The need for this conversation is based on the assumption that the next decade will see more pressures on states and societies. This, in turn, will likely result in more conflicts as local, national, regional and international systems are put under stress. This paper gathers the current data behind this assumption.

Building on the spirit of the White Paper of listening to different voices and perspectives, the paper draws on key reports about future risks and presents a selection of their data and trends. The key reports are:


In addition to these reports, the paper draws on data from supplementary sources, as referenced in the footnotes. Most data presented in this paper are direct citations and constitute a listening exercise of what information exists on
risks to peace. This paper does not engage in a critical analysis of the methods, sources, validity, and politics behind the cited data.¹

The data presented in this paper tells a story about our present understanding of risks to peace in the future. This understanding highlights five trends:

- **Demographic trends** – more people, aging populations, increased urbanization;
- **Economic trends** – more inequality, more unemployment;
- **Power shifts** – changing constellations, diffusion of power, less control by states;
- **Environmental pressures** – more consumption, more natural disasters; and
- **New conflict dynamics** – geo-political tension, chronic violence, new threats.

The paper is structured around these five factors. Overall, they emphasize the increasing pressures on states and societies and that these pressure are likely to overwhelm existing dispute resolution and management systems at all levels. The result might be more conflict. Given this spectrum of risks, the peacebuilding community can point to an ever-increasing evidence base about the use of dialogue, trust-building, and consensus-seeking processes as an effective way to deal with the new strategic landscape; and thereby assist countries move towards a more sustainable peace.

1. **Demographic trends**

**More people**

- “There were only 1 billion humans in 1804; 2 billion in 1927; 6 billion in 1999; and 7.2 billion today. The UN forecasts a range from 8.3 billion to 10.9 billion people by 2050, with 9.6 billion as the mid-projection.”²
- “Population growth is expected to be most rapid in the 49 least developed countries, where it is projected to double in size from about 900 million today to 1.8 billion in 2050.”³
- “Over 60 percent of the global population is likely to live in Africa and Asia by 2050. Approximately 70 percent of the growth is likely to occur in 24 of the world’s poorest countries.”⁴

**Aging populations**

- “The world’s population is getting older, with the population over 60 growing fastest. In less than 40 years, one in every five people will be at least 60 years old. Average lifespan is projected to be 83 years in the developed world and 72 in the less developed world by 2050, compared with 78 and 67 today, and 66 and 42 in 1950.”⁵
- “From 2011-30, pension spending is forecast to grow and additional 1.3% of GDP in developed countries, 2.2% of GDP in developing countries.”⁶

Increasing urbanization

- “Today’s roughly 50-percent urban population will climb to nearly 60 percent, or 4.9 billion people, in 2030. Africa will gradually replace Asia as the region with the highest urbanization growth rate. Urban centers are estimated to generate 80 percent of economic growth.”
- “In 1950, only three of every ten people lived in cities. In 2008, the number of people in cities was greater than that in rural areas for the first time. (...) By 2030, over two billion people may well be living in urban slums.”

2. Economic trends

More inequality

- “Globalisation has been associated with growing inequality. Incomes of the world’s top 1.75 percent of earners reportedly exceed the combined total of those of the bottom 77 percent (...) 39.3 percent of the world’s wealth is reportedly held by 0.6 percent of its adults.”
- “The wealth of 80 individuals is now the same as that owned by the bottom 50% of the global population (...) In 2010, it took 388 billionaires to equal the wealth of the bottom half of the world’s population; by 2014, the figure had fallen to just 80 billionaires.”
- “Women and girls account for six out of ten of the world’s poorest and two-thirds of the world’s illiterate people. According to the UNDP, women perform 66 percent of the world’s work, but earn just 10 percent of the income and own only 1 percent of the property.”

More unemployment

- “At the global level, the number of unemployed people will continue to increase unless policies change course. Global unemployment is expected to approach 208 million in 2015, compared with slightly over 200 million at the time of publication [2013].”
- “Over 70 million young people are out of work, and the number is projected to grow. In advanced economies, 35 percent of young unemployed have not had a job in over six months ... The 2013 World Development Report stated ‘621 million young people are ‘idle’ – not in school or training, not employed and not looking for work’”

3. Power shifts

Changing constellations

- “The US, European, and Japanese share of global income is projected to fall from 56 percent today to well under half by 2030. In 2008, China overtook the US as the world’s largest saver; by 2020, emerging markets’ share of financial assets is projected to almost double.”

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8 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 15.
9 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 25.
11 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 16.
14 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. v.
• “(...) the world’s economic prospects will increasingly depend on the fortunes of the East and South. The developing world already provides more than 50 percent of global economic growth and 40 percent of global investment. Its contribution to global investment growth is more than 70 percent.”15
• “The shift of economic power to emerging markets is in full swing. Reports suggest that the GDP of developing countries is now at least equal to the developed world (...) China and India are on track to have 35 percent of the world’s population and 25 percent of its GDP by 2030.”16

Diffusion of power

• “Whilst the state remains the principal actor in world politics, there are now almost four times as many states as there were in 1945. This increase in players makes international consensus harder to reach.”17
• In 1945 only 41 NGOs held consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council, while in 2014 the figure was 4,155.18
• “Currently about 50 countries are in the awkward stage between autocracy and democracy, with the greatest number concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast and Central Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa.”19

Less control by states

• “The majority of states in the global South can (...) be described as hybrid political orders. Nominally, many are constitutional liberal democracies that operate according to formal, legally enforceable rules. But they coexist with, or are overshadowed by, other competing forms of socio-political order; these have their roots in non-state, indigenous societal structures that rely on a web of social relations and mutual obligations to establish trust and reciprocity.”20
• “By 2030, no country (...) will be a hegemonic power. Enabled by communications technologies, power almost certainly will shift more toward multifaceted and amorphous networks composed of state and nonstate actors that will form to influence global policies on various issues. (...) Networks will constrain policymakers because multiple players will be able to block policymakers’ actions at numerous points.”21
• “By 2020, there are expected to be four billion people online, 31 billion connected devices, 450 billion online interactions performed per day, and up to 50 trillion gigabytes of data.”22
• “During the next 15-20 years, the hardware, software, and connectivity aspects of IT will experience massive growth in capability and complexity as well as more widespread diffusion. This growth and diffusion will present significant challenges for governments and societies, which must find ways to capture the benefits of new IT technologies while dealing with the new threats that those technologies present.”23

15 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p.vi.
16 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 17.
17 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 18.
19 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. vii.
21 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. 19.
22 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 23.
23 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. 86.
4. Environmental pressures

More consumption

- “Demand for food is expected to rise at least 35 percent by 2030 while demand for water is expected to rise by 40 percent. Nearly half of the world’s population will live in areas experiencing severe water stress.”24
- “Globally, three billion people still have inadequate access to water […]. The World Bank estimates that two in every three countries will be water-stressed by 2025, at which time around 2.4 billion people will face ‘absolute water scarcity’.”25
- “FAO estimates that some 30% of the [world’s] population (2 billion people) suffers from hidden hunger. […] Some 30% of fish stocks have already collapsed, and 21% of mammal species and 70% of plants are under threat. […] Global waste has increased 10-fold in the last century, and it could double by 2025 from where it is today.”26
- “Total energy consumption per year is almost six times what it was in 1950; per capita use has more than doubled. Food production accounts for close to one third of all available energy, and agriculture accounts for around 70 percent of water withdrawals worldwide.”27
- “Shell forecasts global energy demand to triple by 2050 from 2000 levels, assuming that the major socioeconomic trends continue. This, they assert, will require ‘some combination of extraordinary demand moderation and extraordinary production acceleration.’ BP forecasts a 41% increase in world energy demand from 2012 to 2035 of which 95% will come from emerging economies.”28

More natural disasters

- “Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth’s surface than any preceding decade since 1850. The period from 1983 to 2012 was likely the warmest 30 year period of the last 1400 years in the Northern Hemisphere, where such assessment is possible (medium confidence).”29
- “Impacts from recent climate related extremes, such as heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclones, and wildfires, reveal significant vulnerability and exposure of some ecosystems and many human systems to current climate variability (very high confidence).”30
- “Until mid-century, projected climate change will impact human health mainly by exacerbating health problems that already exist (very high confidence).”31
- “In urban areas, climate change is projected to increase risks for people, assets, economies and ecosystems, including risks from heat stress, storms and extreme precipitation, inland and coastal flooding, landslides, air pollution, drought, water scarcity, sea-level rise, and storm surges (very high confidence).”32

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24 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. v.
25 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 19.
26 TMP, 2013-14 State of the Future, pp. 13, 20, 21..
27 OMSC, Now for the Long Term, p. 18.
30 The Core Writing Team et al., Climate Change 2014, p. 8.
31 The Core Writing Team et al., Climate Change 2014, p. 15.
32 The Core Writing Team et al., Climate Change 2014, p. 15-16.
5. New conflict dynamics

Geopolitical tensions

- “(…) the risks of interstate conflict are increasing owing to changes in the international system. The underpinnings of the current post-Cold War equilibrium are beginning to shift. (…) If the international system becomes more fragmented and existing forms of cooperation are no longer as seen as advantageous to many of the key global players, the potential for competition and conflict also will increase.”  
- “(…) interstate conflict is this year considered the most likely high-impact risk over the next 10 years, or indeed perhaps event sooner”.
- “World military expenditure in 2013 is estimated to have been $1747 billion, representing 2.4 per cent of global gross domestic product or $248 for each person alive today.”

Chronic violence

- “87 countries in all of the world’s regions can currently be identified as facing the prospects of potential violence, prolonged deadlock, or a relapse into violent conflict over the next two to three-year period. Of these, only 23 are currently receiving formal mediation assistance from the UN, including by the virtue of a peace operation”.
- “There were an estimated 475,000 deaths in 2012 as a result of homicide. Sixty percent of these were males aged 15–44 years, making homicide the third leading cause of death for males in this age group. Within low- and middle-income countries, the highest estimated rates of homicide occur in the Region of the Americas, with 28.5 homicides per 100,000 population, followed by the African Region with a rate of 10.9 homicides per 100,000 population.”
- “More than 526,000 people are killed each year as a result of lethal violence. One in every ten of all reported violent deaths around the world occurs in so-called conflict settings or during terrorist activities, while 396,000 intentional homicides occur every year.”
- “While the number of refugees uprooted by conflicts has decreased in the past twenty years, many more have been forced from their homes and stayed within their own country. More than 33 million people are internally displaced and the average length of displacement is 17 years.”

New threats

- “(…) cyber threats remain among the most likely high-impact risk.”
- “Already, cyber attacks account for USD300 billion to USD1 trillion in global losses.”

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33 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. 64.
41 KPMG, Future State 2030, p. 62.
• “The next 15-20 years will see a wider spectrum of more accessible instruments of war, especially precision-strike capabilities, cyber instruments, and bioterror weaponry. [...] Current trends suggest that deep interconnectivity between different software systems and devices is likely to become the norm, enabling remote access to all kinds of systems that are offline today. [...] As societies become more dependent on software and systems become more interconnected, the potential levels of damage that cyberweapons will be able to inflict will increase.”42
• “The military is expected to increase its use of robots to reduce human exposure in high-risk situations and environments as well as the number of troops necessary for certain operations. The ability to deploy such robots rapidly, for particular tasks, could help military planners address the wider resource demands present in a more fragmented, multipolar world.”43

Conclusion: Towards a tipping point?

This paper has reviewed key reports and distilled a selection of data and trends about risks to peace. What the studies show is that there is a wealth of data and trend analysis and that a more systematic effort to analyse future risks to peace focusing on specific regions would be a useful exercise to inform peacebuilding policy and practice. Such analyses may also point to several other risk factors that do not feature prominently in the selected reports such as large footprint investments,44 parallel and criminal markets,45 as well as national or regional political conflicts that escalate into violent confrontations.46 The origins of the war in Ukraine are a reminder that the data and trends presented in this paper are by no means the sole cause of conflict. In many regions, they interact or amplify existing conflict dynamics.

In conclusion, we want to ask how the data and trends compare to analyses of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, and make a suggestion about what may be different in the next decade. Over a decade ago, a major report on conflict prevention made the case that

“Conflict and instability are increasingly driven by non-traditional factors like failures in governance, health crises and environmental degradation. Globalization and technological change are increasing interdependence and inter-connectedness in ways that magnify the security-related impact of developmental challenges around the world. [...] Even when the connections are less direct, non-traditional threats are increasing the risk of broad instability. Local economic stagnation, environmental degradation, demographic shifts, urbanization, failures in governance and declining health status are all creating pressure on governments around the world.”47

One may also point to the 1987 Brundtland Commission report ‘Our Common Future’ or the 1996 report of the Commission on Global Governance ‘Our Global Neighbourhood’ that also

42 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. 67, 69.
43 NIC, Global Trends 2030, p. 91.
identified a similar set of risk factors.\textsuperscript{48} If we have known about the risks to peace for about three decades, what may be different in the next decade? The difference could be that the next decade pushes the slowly evolving mix of risks towards a certain ‘tipping point’ – “that one dramatic moment when everything can change all at once.”\textsuperscript{49} Until this moment comes, the peacebuilding community has an opportunity to expand the evidence base about the effectiveness of dialogue, trust building, and consensus seeking processes to address and mitigate risks to peace. This evidence can subsequently be conveyed across institutions and sectors to ensure better implementation of peacebuilding practice as a response to risks to peace.

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\textbf{Disclaimer:} All views expressed in this article are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, or the four Platform partners: the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP); the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO).

\textbf{About the White Paper on Peacebuilding:} The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:

The UN Peacebuilding Architecture: Institutional Evolution in Context

Sarah Hearn, Alejandra Kubitschek Bujones, Alischa Kugel

Introduction

There is a broad agreement that the United Nations’ “Peacebuilding Architecture” (PBA) has failed to live up to the high hopes that existed when the 2005 World Summit agreed to establish the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and its related entities, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This paper explores why this is the case.

We briefly review the initial logic and expectations of the PBA in part 1, and sketch out the factors that have affected the PBA’s impact both positively and negatively in part 2. We also think it is important to understand the PBA in the context of the evolution and expansion of wider UN peacebuilding efforts, and further detail the existing relationships with UN peace operations in part 3.

The original logic and expectations of the PBA

During the 1990s, an increase in intra-state conflicts generated a growth in focus by the international community on peacebuilding. A sequential approach to the transition from war to peace that had characterized inter-state conflicts did not hold in the complex civil conflicts after the Cold War. Such conflicts did not tend to end in a decisive military victory and post-conflict reconstruction phase, but rather countries were fragile, trapped in cyclical cycles of conflict, with complex causes that repeatedly risked violence flaring as states formed. As international understanding of the links between political, security and development processes underpinning state formation and conflict grew, the UN and other actors started to develop peacebuilding as a field in its own right.

The concept of peacebuilding was first introduced at the UN by Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s Agenda for Peace in 1992. The document defined peacebuilding as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” Initially conceived as part of a conflict sequence from preventive diplomacy through to peacemaking and peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding, the UN developed the peacebuilding concept further in the 2000 “Brahimi Report” and the 2004 report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, to encapsulate a cyclical view of the causes of conflict and relapse and responses to addressing them.

These analytical reports identified a series of deep challenges within the UN system in effectively carrying out peacebuilding efforts. In many instances, UN and member state capacity and focus had been dispersed, which had resulted in gaps, duplication of efforts and missed opportunities to support national peacebuilding processes. In particular:

- the UN had struggled to identify and deploy staff with expertise in a timely manner;
- peacebuilding efforts between UN peacekeeping operations and political missions and the UN development system were siloed, dispersed and poorly coordinated;
- a body of best practices and policies on peacebuilding was needed for the whole UN system;
- the UN lacked rapid funds that could respond to peacebuilding crises, opportunities and gaps as they emerged; and
- the international system as a whole – institutions, traditional donors and emerging powers - lacked coherence on the ground.

By the time of the 2005 World Summit, there was widespread recognition of the need for new institutions that would strengthen strategic coherence in addressing the needs of a range of countries affected by violent conflict, and that would help to bridge the gap between international political, security and development efforts. This consensus led to the adoption of the PBA at the World Summit in 2005.

The original logic of the PBA was to build synergies and coherence of the UN’s (institutional and member-state) peacebuilding efforts; it was not intended as a new operational arm or set of self-standing entities. Many argued then and now that the PBA includes not only the PBC, PBSO and PBF, but the full spectrum of UN institutions, tools and member states; to which the PBC, PBSO and PBF should bring greater coherence.

Specifically, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established “to identify countries which are under stress and risk sliding towards State collapse; to organize, in partnership with the national Government, proactive assistance in preventing that process from developing further; to assist in the planning for transitions between conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding; and the efforts of the international community in post-conflict peacebuilding over whatever period may

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6 Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths.
be necessary.” The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, 7 listed the PBC’s core peacebuilding functions as to:

- promote coordination and coherence,
- support resource mobilization,
- facilitate peacebuilding strategy,
- serve as a knowledge hub; and
- to conduct advocacy for peacebuilding and for countries’ needs.

Alongside the PBC, a multi-donor Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) was created to fill gaps and catalyze longer-term funding, and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was entrusted with administering the PBF, advising the PBC and coordinating peacebuilding strategy and policy learning within the UN.8

Factors that positively and negatively shaped the impact of the PBA

The initial strategic concept for the PBA began to unravel during the early negotiations on the founding resolutions. Parallel attempts to reform the Security Council’s permanent membership in 2005 had failed, and the PBC quickly became a safety valve for discontent. The bargains upon the founding of the PBA reflected these tensions. While officially serving as an advisory body to the Security Council and General Assembly, it had no independent authority or decision making power over other bodies.9 Regardless, some member-states, mostly of the South, perceived the PBC as a potential opportunity to influence the Security Council and to recalibrate inequities in global governance.10 Permanent members of the Council on the other hand were uncomfortable with this potential “encroachment” into peace and security policy, at least in geopolitically charged contexts.

As a result, whilst the PBC had originally been intended to provide an agile platform where all actors engaged in peacebuilding in a given context could discuss and agree upon a common strategy and priorities, during the negotiations, the PBC membership became significantly more fixed and formulaic. Eventually, the formula for the core membership of the PBC’s “Organizational Committee” was composed of 31 members, drawn from seven countries from the Security Council, including the P5, seven from the General Assembly, seven from the Economic and Social Council, five from the top ten UN troop contributors and five of the UN’s top ten financial donors. In parallel, it was decided that each country to join “the PBC’s agenda” was to have a unique formal grouping and the “Country-Specific Configuration” (CSC) was invented. The CSC was drawn from the PBC’s membership, the country itself, international organizations, neighboring states, and key bilateral partners. 11 An even wider range of countries have joined the CSCs – today around 50+ members can be found in a CSC whether or not they offer capital or a presence on the ground in a country undergoing a process of peacebuilding.

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10 Ibid
The PBC and PBSO’s intended strategic role was diluted early on. While the mandate envisaged in the 2005 World Summit outcome document placed international strategy at the forefront, the PBC’s founding resolutions negotiated through the General Assembly crafted a diplomatic body charged with raising awareness of a country’s peacebuilding priorities and needs; with mobilizing resources; and with promoting coherence; but not with international strategy. Inclusion of a country on the PBC’s agenda would be largely driven by the Security Council. Initially, PBSO was to provide strategic input alongside the national governments seeking assistance, but this mandate quickly unraveled as some countries and UN departments pushed back on a leadership role for the new office; a point from which PBSO has not recovered. In addition, the founding resolutions of the PBC required it to operate by consensus of its 31 members (double the Security Council), which curbed decision-making.

The Center on International Cooperation first reviewed the PBA in 2008. In the PBA’s first year in 2006, we found that the PBC’s immediate procedural and negotiation obstacles had resulted in long delays, frustration, and confusion in the field and at headquarters about what the PBC was for. Cumbersome negotiations had already resulted in the development of an institution that was considerably larger than first envisioned, but with no institutional weight, resources or other tools to assert itself. By the end of its first year, a degree of self-fulfilling skepticism about whether the PBC could fulfill its mandate effectively or efficiently had already started to set in.


From the early days, the PBC did have some successes. When Dan Smith (2013) analyzed evidence for the UN of the impact of the PBC, he found evidence even of early wins in the first countries to join the PBC - Burundi and Sierra Leone. In Burundi, the PBC had enabled bilateral donors and multilateral agencies to discuss and coordinate peacebuilding assistance with the government. The PBC was credited with aiding and mobilizing development aid for Burundi. A donor conference led by the CSC chair in Bujumbura in March 2007 pledged over $680 million dollars, which was more than expected and can partly be seen as a consequence of the PBC’s advocacy efforts. In Sierra Leone, a study by IPI (2009) found that the PBC had enabled the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) to bring UN actors on board with a joint vision for the country. ERSG Von der Schulenburg had leveraged the PBC to provide the political support that he needed to exercise his role as coordinator of the UN on the ground. This helped foster political support for a more coherent in-country approach.

In parallel, the UN’s peacebuilding efforts in the field continued to expand. The UN development system and both types of UN crisis management operations - military peacekeeping operations and civilian led special political missions - directly contribute to peacebuilding. Over the past two decades, peacekeeping operations evolved from carrying out primarily military tasks to include multidimensional mandates involving a broad range of peacebuilding tasks. Of the 15

12 Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths.
14 Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths.
16 Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths.
peacekeeping operations currently in the field, 9 are mandated by the Security Council to carry out multidimensional mandates. At the headquarters level, the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS) work with PBSO as well as other partners “to ensure appropriate planning, execution, resourcing and staffing of peacebuilding aspects” of peacekeeping operations.\(^\text{18}\) Political missions, run by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), have also expanded over the years, many working with the PBA. UN peacebuilding offices in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic (CAR) have focused on harmonizing efforts of the UN development, peace and security arms to support comprehensive peacebuilding strategies.

Peacebuilding processes are at different stages in each of the countries on the PBC’s agenda and the experience of coordination between peace operations and the Commission is varied. In Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia combined engagement appears to have contributed to consolidating peace in those countries, while the situations in Guinea-Bissau and the CAR have deteriorated, in the latter case necessitating the replacement of the UN peacebuilding office with a military peacekeeping operation mandated to protect civilians and to establish security.

The reasons for the success or failure in the various countries are wide-ranging and beyond the scope of this short overview. Reviews of the PBC have shown that engagement between, and impact of, peace operations and the PBC is most effective when there is a close working relationship between the head of a UN mission and the Chair of a PBC County Configuration,\(^\text{19}\) making the best use of the PBC’s ability to advocate, to convene actors and to provide a diplomatic platform for the countries concerned.

The evidence suggested that a body like the PBC, with smart engagement from national governments and UN leaders on the ground, could draw together a broad range of actors, including the UN, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and in some cases civil society and political parties, to encourage coordination and coherence, add support to existing national resource mobilization efforts, and provide a diplomatic platform for countries to advocate for themselves.\(^\text{20}\) Recent success in mobilizing a new round of peacebuilding commitments alongside the World Bank and other institutional and bilateral donors for Burundi (2013), and in Sierra Leone’s desire to remain on the agenda of the PBC in the near term even as it successfully graduated from the Council’s agenda (2014), lend support to this view.

However, the model of PBC impact that has emerged also reveals that the success of the PBC relies upon the good will and personal commitment of the Chair of the CSC, a collaborative partner on the ground in the UN and a collaborative host government. What has not emerged is a more institutionalized way of working between the PBC, the UN’s institutions and wide range of countries undergoing peacebuilding processes.

These strategic weaknesses were brought to the fore when peacebuilding processes relapsed in CAR and Guinea Bissau. In both instances, the PBC struggled to craft a role for itself. Amidst international division on responses to the military coup in Guinea-Bissau in 2012, the Council mandated the Secretary-General and his Special Representative with forging international consensus, but agreed no role for the PBC.\(^\text{21}\) As the crisis unfolded in CAR, the PBC could not agree on a Chair for the CAR configuration (the previous Chair had resigned in April 2012 before


\(^{19}\) Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths, page 8.

\(^{20}\) Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths.

\(^{21}\) S/RES/2048 [2012]
the crisis had taken hold), discounting the PBC from the equation until Morocco was elected almost two years later in January 2014.

Meanwhile, a larger percentage of the UN’s peacebuilding work is conducted through operational settings that are not on the PBC’s agenda, including in Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Increasingly peace operations are mandated to carry out peacebuilding tasks in extremely volatile and geopolitically-charged country situations.

The original logic of the PBA would have suggested that the PBC engages with the full range of these countries as and when needed in fostering coherence and advocating for their peacebuilding efforts. There are multiple reasons why this has not happened. In part it is because in these country settings, other mandate areas of peace operations (such as security) may take precedence to allow the creation of an enabling environment. In part the challenge is that parts of the UN and the Security Council lack confidence in the PBC and PBSO’s strategic capacity and tools in high profile contexts; whilst the Council continues to exercise caution in allowing the PBC onto Council “turf.” In part this is because the PBC’s cumbersome procedures and working practices have not resonated with countries which have large international presences on the ground. And in part this is because the PBC has not managed to mobilize resources on a scale that alone would attract countries with existing large aid commitments.

The Peacebuilding Fund is widely recognized to have grown in considerable strength following independent reviews of the fund in 2009 by the UN, by donors in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and again by the UN in 2013.22 Whilst the 2009 review outlined recommendations for measures to urgently improve the Fund’s performance and management, by 2011-2013 the PBF was scoring consistently as good value for money and satisfactory to strong along a range of performance indicators. The Fund has supported a broad range of peace operations by filling peacebuilding funding gaps and incentivizing the UN to collaborate around common peacebuilding strategies. Countries on the PBC agenda receive proportionately more from the Fund than “non-PBC” countries.23 The PBF’s donor commitments and disbursements have risen steadily, reaching $86.4m in global disbursements in 2013.24 Notwithstanding the PBF’s role in a broad range of countries, it remains a fairly small base compared to the large-scale donor commitments in a wider set of countries where there are UN missions. A strategic question for the PBF going forward is how it can further build synergies with, and catalyze a wider range of non-UN funds for peacebuilding.

In the context of the lack of wide traction and institutionalization for the PBA, back in 2010, the UN General Assembly led a review of the Peacebuilding Commission, co-chaired by Ireland, Mexico and the South Africa.25 Whilst it was still early days for the PBC, the review was somewhat hard-hitting for a UN document. The review acknowledged early impact by the PBC, but also pointedly stated that after five years, the “threshold of success has not been achieved.” It confirmed that the momentum that led to the creation of the PBC had waned, and that the PBC lacked overall vision. Countries’ initial enthusiasm to join the “agenda” of the PBC had declined as the PBC had struggled to mobilize new resources, and had become associated with heavy bureaucratic processes.

23 Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths, page 10.
The review laid out a number of recommendations aimed at making the PBC more relevant to the UN system and a wider range of conflict-affected countries. In particular:

- better coordination of all actors in the PBC and with its partners;
- renewed energy for resource mobilization among the PBC membership;
- respect for national ownership;
- above all, it noted that peacebuilding did not follow an automatic sequence of activities and that more flexible, agile and lighter forms of diplomatic engagement were needed to replace the burdensome working practices that had emerged.

To get there, the review recognized that the PBC would need a more empowered relationship with the Security Council; that it would need to be better-supported by a more strategic PBSO and synergies with the PBF; and a strengthened communications strategy to re-make the case for the PBC in the aftermath of the early skepticism.

The 2010 review confined itself to reviewing the PBC. However, it pointed to a wider challenging institutional context of the PBA. PBSO continued to struggle to define its niche. The 2010 review noted the lack of institutional memory and knowledge on peacebuilding in the office, a high turn-over of, and reliance on, seconded staff, and a tendency to duplicate the work of others rather than convene the UN system as a “centre of excellence.”

In the years that followed the 2010 review, recommendations to the PBC were only partly implemented. The review was based on consultations with the PBC members, but commentators noted that it was not a consensus document of the geopolitical camps within the PBC itself. As a follow-up to the review, the chair of the PBC circulated a series of draft “Roadmaps”, prepared with the assistance of the PBSO. Analysts have noted that these have remained at a high level of abstraction, permitting various actors to quietly undermine or simply ignore proposals that they do not like, reflecting a sense among the PBC membership that its “Organizational Committee” has lacked teeth. In addition, the UN lead departments had felt insufficiently consulted on the review process and outcomes.

In parallel, a rift emerged from 2011 between the PBC and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (comprised of OECD donors and the g7+ group of fragile states), largely over influence and authority in global peacebuilding policy. OECD members lobbied hard with UN members for its aid effectiveness agenda, the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States,” without extensive consultations in the first instance. This alienated some members of the PBC, who raised concerns about a Western-dominated agenda, that subordinated development to security concerns.

29 Ibid
30 For an analysis of the political debates at the UN around the security and development nexus and the objections to the “New Deal” see Jenna Slotin, Molly Elgin-Cossart, “Why Would Peace be Controversial at the United Nations?: Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Framework” (Center on International Cooperation, New York University,
the opportunity with an institutional response to working with the g7+ countries and International Dialogue, which was left to the individual Chairs to navigate in countries which had joined the g7+. The potential result is an ever-growing network of donor-dominated peacebuilding “compacts” and aid allocations on the ground without the buy-in of all relevant powers; and a PBC that risks being marginalized from much of the action in the field. If correct, this would pose a significant step backwards from the founding days of the PBA when the need for greater international coherence was initially recognized.

A steady decline in PBC ambition and countries’ interest in it and a growth in prominence of other UN and international actors who are charged with forging international coherence, coupled with low consensus on the strategic vision, objectives and ambition of the PBA within the PBC and the UN system, have become significant factors preventing the PBC and the PBSO from evolving into a more significant institutional force beyond the recognized efforts of the individual chairs of the CSCs and the PBF.

UN peace operations and peacebuilding

This part places the PBA in the context of the evolution and expansion of wider UN peacebuilding efforts, and further detail on the existing relationships with UN peace operations. Both types of UN crisis management operations - military peacekeeping operations and civilian led special political missions - directly contribute to the peacebuilding. The intransient link between peacekeeping and peacebuilding has long been recognized. Over the past two decades, peacekeeping operations have evolved from carrying out primarily military tasks such as ceasefire monitoring to include multidimensional mandates that include a broad range of peacebuilding tasks, such as security sector reform. In 2000, five years prior to the establishment of the PBA, the Brahimi report underlined the important roles peacekeepers play in carrying out critical peacebuilding tasks. In January 2013, the Security Council passed resolution 2286, reaffirming the “importance of multidimensional peacekeeping” and highlighted the “contributions that peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions make to early peacebuilding.”

Of the 15 peacekeeping operations currently in the field, 9 are mandated by the Security Council to carry out multidimensional mandates. In the field, peacekeeping operations contribute to peacebuilding efforts by i) working with national counterparts and international partners on articulating peacebuilding priorities and providing strategic guidance; ii) assisting in establishing an enabling environment for the implementation of peacebuilding tasks; and by iii) implementing peacebuilding tasks themselves. At the headquarters level, the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS) work with the Peacebuilding Support Office as well as other partners “to ensure appropriate planning, execution, resourcing and staffing of peacebuilding aspects” of peacekeeping operations, while the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) provides crucial support to peacebuilding efforts on the country level.

Political missions contribute to the PBA through a network of field-based missions in countries that are also on the Peacebuilding Commission’s (PBC) agenda.\(^{34}\) In addition to the UN office in Burundi, this includes integrated peacebuilding offices in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic that focus on harmonizing efforts of the UN family on the ground to carry out comprehensive peacebuilding strategies. The offices provide the PBC with a direct link to the field, which can inform guidance the Commission provides on integrated peacebuilding strategies. The PBC’s proximity to key UN bodies, including the Security Council, meanwhile can benefit efforts in the field through building strategic priorities across the UN system, mobilizing resources for peacebuilding activities and by sustaining attention on post-conflict countries. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) can apply for PBF funding to support activities and programs in political mission country settings, that functions as a flexible mechanism to fill critical peacebuilding gaps.

Peacebuilding processes are at different stages in each of the countries on the PBC’s agenda and the experience of coordination between peace operations and the Commission is varied. In Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia combined engagement has contributed to the stabilization of the countries, while the situations in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic deteriorated. Guinea-Bissau’s government was toppled by a military coup in April 2012 and saw its elections that would allow for a return to constitutional order postponed until April 2014. In the Central African Republic meanwhile, rebels toppled the government in March 2013 and the ensuing violence forced the temporary relocation of staff of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office. Given the worsening of the security situation, the Peacebuilding Office will be replaced by a UN peacekeeping operation later this year that will take over command from the French and African Union forces that are already on the ground. The reasons for the success or failure in the various countries are wide-ranging and beyond the scope of this short overview. However, previous reviews of the PBC have shown that generally engagement between peace operations and the PBC is most effective when there is a close work relationship between the head of a UN mission and the Chair of a PBC County Configuration,\(^{35}\) enabling closer coordination and coordination of the key actors involved and making use of the PBC’s advocacy and resource mobilization role.

Meanwhile, a large percentage of the UN’s peacebuilding work is conducted through operational settings of peacekeeping operations and political missions that are not on the PBC’s agenda, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Increasingly peace operations are mandated to carry out peacebuilding tasks in extremely volatile country situations. In these country settings, other mandate areas such as the protection of civilians and the extension of state authority may take precedence over peacebuilding activities to allow the creation of an enabling environment. Dangerous operating environments may also restrict movement of mission staff, hindering the effective roll out of peacebuilding activities and missions still content with insufficiently flexible staffing processes that make it difficult to acquire peacebuilding experts when needed. As mentioned above, the Peacebuilding Fund can support peace operations by filling peacebuilding funding gaps, though countries on the PBC agenda receive proportionately more from the Fund than non-PBC countries.\(^{36}\) With $40.8 million in 2013,\(^{37}\) the PBF also has a fairly small base, given the large scale funding needs in countries emerging from conflict.

\(^{34}\) These are Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and the Central African Republic.
\(^{36}\) Ibid, p. 10.
\(^{37}\) The Peacebuilding Fund, Report by the Secretary-General (A/68/722), p. 4.
Despite these obstacles, peace operations do play an important role in peacebuilding, as early peacebuilders that help create enabling environments, in providing strategic guidance to national counterparts, in harmonizing and coordinating peacebuilding activities by the UN Country Team and international actors on the ground, and by implementing peacebuilding tasks themselves. Given peace operations’ central role in peacebuilding, there is a need for improved cooperation and coordination between key headquarter based actors including DPKO, DFS, DPA, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Security Council as well as actors in the field, including national governments, heads of missions and the UN Country Teams.

Conclusion

Given the complex range of institutional and political challenges that face the PBA on the one hand, and the complexity of current conflicts and peacebuilding requirements on the other, serious consideration needs to be given to the scope of the 2015 PBA review. Its scope should be shaped not just by form (the existing PBA construct), but the wider context in which it operates and the impact the PBA needs to have to be “relevant, catalytic and effective.” Recommendations for the future role and tools of the PBA should ultimately be derived from a renewed analysis of the role of an intergovernmental PBA, alongside other international mechanisms, if countries are to finally exit a cyclical dialogue on the “value-added” of the PBA.

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Methodological Note: This analysis is based on a review of existing primary and secondary literature sources on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and key-informant interviews with members of the PBC and Security Council, drawn from North and South, and with a sample of UN representatives charged with peacebuilding policy in New York. In order to make a frank contribution to international discussion, all interviews were conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

Disclaimer: All views expressed in this article are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, or the four Platform partners: the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP); the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO).

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Understanding the Negotiations Towards the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture

Jussi Hanhimäki

Introduction

This paper explores the origins of the United Nation’s (UN) Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) with a specific focus on the reasons for its creation at a particular point in time (2005). The paper is concerned with the negotiation dynamics and what those involved in negotiations at the time hoped they would achieve. It thus starts by placing the PBA in context: the specific historical moment that made the creation of PBA possible and, at the same time, shaped it in ways that may in retrospect appear far from satisfactory. In preparing the paper, the author conducted informal interviews with individuals that were part of the negotiation process towards the PBA. The key points recurring in the conversation were about the international politics of the moment, the UN’s institutional restrictions and possibilities, and the role of vested state interests. This brief paper will not aim to examine the successes or failures to deliver and what the expectations of those involved were at the time. It will begin with a brief description of the PBA, followed by a discussion of the context in which the design was negotiated and the flaws that this context evidently produced.

The PBA in a nutshell

The PBA was created as a result of the agreements at the September 2005 World Summit in New York, billed as the ‘largest gathering of world leaders in

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1 This paper was mainly built upon existing literature on the PBA, UN resolutions and other public documents, as well as interviews with a select group of policymakers (UN officials, diplomats and others involved in the negotiations that led up to the World Summit). The author encountered two key methodological problems. The first was that the interviewees approached were often unable to recollect details of negotiations; the second was that their views about the outcome were inevitably coloured by the evolution of the PBA over the past decade.

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:
history.’ Despite concerns about the United States’ (US) position – sparked by the aggressive nature of Washington’s recently appointed UN Ambassador, John Bolton – the Summit endorsed a number of significant proposals, such as the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) and the creation of new Human Rights Council. The Summit also closed the curtains on the Trusteeship Council. The broad UN reform agenda that had been discussed and debated, however, was mostly postponed, much of it indefinitely.

The 2005 Summit did agree upon the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), an inter-governmental advisory body that would help countries in their post-conflict recovery. Three months later, on December 20, 2005, the UN Security Council (UNSC) formally created the PBC by adopting Resolution 1645. The new Commission’s main purpose was to ‘bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peace building and recovery.’

Aside from the PBC, the three-pronged PBA came to include the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The former was created as a type of experts’ bureau that aimed, as the name suggests, to support the PBC by drawing on existing expertise – the World Summit Outcome Document specifically requested the Secretary-General to create the PBSO ‘within the Secretariat and from within existing resources’. In turn, the Peacebuilding Fund was established to raise and allocate resources for countries in post-conflict situations. By the end of 2008, the PBF had raised close to $300 million.

At the time of its creation, the three-pronged Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) – and particularly the Peace Building Commission – was innovative in a number of ways. On a general level, it recognised the need to move, and plan beyond, peacekeeping or peace enforcement towards prevention. The whole idea was, after all, that the UN system could help fragile states towards economic and political stability. More concretely, for such an undertaking to be successful, the structure supporting peacebuilding needed to be, paradoxically, at the same time flexible and centralised. Thus, the PBC was to be a single organ that would be able to draw upon the expertise within various parts of the UN system in order to best achieve its overall mission (of building peace). The mission – the measures needed to set a post-conflict nation on course for recovery – would define the specific institutional coalition (built mainly upon existing parts of the UN) necessary.

This may all sound reasonable and perfectly logical: for complex problems – and peacebuilding surely qualifies under these criteria – you need flexibility, as well as political and economic support. The terms of the PBC and the composition of the PBSO would provide the ability to tap on the many different forms of expertise available within the UN system; the broad membership of the PBC would guarantee that any mission it approved would have sufficient political backing; the PBF would raise and have at its disposal the funds necessary to undertake long-term missions, even if the ‘headline value’ of a specific post-conflict nation’s evolution declined. An architecture indeed.

But, there were several flaws within the PBA, recognised by many at the time of its creation and endlessly criticised later on. Institutional rivalries, specific goals of nation states and the international political climate of the day all conspired to shape the PBA into something that was clearly not a radical break with the past, but rather a somewhat innovative way of meeting the needs of a host of stakeholders.

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The broader context of the PBA

As with any project within the UN system, the evolution from an idea (or set of ideas) to actual resolution with practical consequences included so many actors and compromises that it would be futile to try to pin down a specific founding coalition. Moreover, the chronology depends on whether we look at the specific proposals and discussions in the immediate turn or in the long durée, or whether one examines the PBA as part of an intellectual evolution or a pragmatic response to specific challenges on the ground. Yet, a few general points emerge fairly clearly.

First, reforming peace operations had been on the UN agenda since the early 1990s. It was related to the apparent increase in the number of intrastate conflicts that, in turn, made policymakers and academic observers focus on peacebuilding, a concept crystallised in Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali’s 1992 ‘Agenda for Peace’. The 2000 ‘Brahimi Report’ and the 2004 ‘High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change’ further developed the notion of the importance of mechanisms that would prevent recurring conflicts in areas that seemed to be caught in never-ending cycles of violence, producing what are at times called ‘failed states’. In short: times were changing and pressure was building for the UN to change its approach to building peace as well.

Second, the PBA emerged as part – and perhaps even somewhat as a substitute for – broader UN reform. While discussions about reforming the UN Security Council stalled, criticism of the UN’s ineffectiveness did prompt another report and an initiative by Kofi Annan. ‘Delivering as One’ honed in on the need to increase effectiveness and coherence in the UN’s development, humanitarian and environmental activities. The PBA was in large measure part of this broad thrust for reform.

Third, for some involved in the process that culminated in the World Summit and the PBA, the substance may not have been the key point. Some UN member states, for example, allegedly used the negotiation process as a means of building connections and support for their own national agendas. For instance, some small European and African states teamed up – by organising workshops or via diplomatic networking – to propose and advocate the creation of an organisation very close to the eventual PBC as a means of promoting its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC. ³

Equally significant, turf battles between UN institutions – ‘the absurdity of continuing rivalries’, as one former UN official put it – may well have prolonged and complicated the process that ultimately produced the PBA. Given the ‘transversal’ nature of peacebuilding – economists, humanitarian workers, doctors, security specialists and experts from many other fields were bound to contribute to any successful post-conflict statebuilding effort – it was of concern for numerous UN agencies. Add to this any number of humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the end result was an alphabet soup of real and potential stakeholders. Searching for acceptable compromises became a necessity if any agreement was to be found during the negotiations leading up to and following the World Summit.

Fourth, the international political climate of the early 21st century when the negotiations took place was extremely volatile. 9/11, the war in Afghanistan, and the US-led invasion of Iraq had produced tensions within the UN Security Council and, perhaps more importantly, called into question the relevance of the UN system writ large. This had two likely consequences for the negotiations. On the one hand, those – and they were undoubtedly the majority – who wished

³ The bid was successful – Denmark and Tanzania were non-permanent members of the UNSC in 2005-2006.
to demonstrate the relevance of the UN in post-conflict situations were even more keen to work towards a successful outcome. On the other hand, such eagerness probably increased the likelihood of compromises that watered down the potential efficiency of the PBA: to achieve a positive outcome – and hence a demonstration of the UN’s continued significance – became a goal in its own right. Substance may have suffered.

The broad context against which the PBA emerged could thus be characterised by two sets of opposite agendas within the UN system that reflected a battle between pro-reform versus turf protection attitudes of departments and specialised agencies. The other set of opposing agendas reflected a battle between member states that, on the one hand, wanted to assist the UN in becoming more efficient and, on the other hand, wanted to see the UN as an institution permanently handicapped – to the point of a political willingness to undermine the foundations of the organisation.

These opposing sets of interests and goals help explain why most of those involved in the reform process eventually emerged – if the interviews conducted a decade later are any guide – as, at best, with mixed feelings. That there had been reform was seen by some as a positive fact. The PBA was a step forward or ‘better than nothing’; an incremental reform was all one could expect. To others, it appeared a completely inappropriate negotiation outcome that – as many then believed – would not be able to seriously address the issues that the PBA was supposed to address.

**Why so far but no further?**

The obvious question that follows is: why? Why did the PBA take the shape it ultimately took? Why was something ‘more’ – a new agency, a total overhaul of UN peace operations and the system by which they are funded – seemingly impossible to achieve? What exactly were the political pressures and institutional constraints at play?

One needs only to look at the lines of communication and composition of the PBC to grasp part of the answer to these questions. The creation of the PBC was a sum of many compromises. Some of these included:

- The PBC would have two masters: the General Assembly and the Security Council, both that passed identical resolutions in late 2005 to support the creation of this advisory body.
- The Organisational Committee (OC) of the PBC would have 31 members, representing the UNSC (7), UN General Assembly (7), ECOSOC (7), as well as 5 from the top contributors to UN budget and the top five contributors of military personnel to UN missions.
- Because of its nature as an advisory body, the PBC would have no actual authority over the many (up to 17, in some cases) bodies that contributed to peacebuilding.

This was piecemeal reform – a point all those interviewed tended to agree upon. On the one hand, the PBC structure was clearly inclusive and the PBA as such therefore had, at least in principle, broad political support. On the other hand, this also meant that the capacity to act rapidly – something reformers often yearned for – was not easily forthcoming from the newly developed structure.

While the watered-down outcome may have satisfied the interests of a number of already existing UN bodies with a stake in the creation of the PBA – such as UN Development Programme, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Political
Affairs (DPA), and others – one can further speculate about the role of specific UN member states in the reform process. Denmark and Tanzania’s interest in using (at least in some fashion) their active involvement as a means of building support for their bids to join the UNSC has been already mentioned as an example of how reform was instrumentalised to serve other purposes. Others, including the US under the George W. Bush Administration, were not particularly keen to empower the UN in the early 21st century.

Another factor explaining the nature of the PBA may well have been, simply, ‘reform fatigue.’ By 2005, UN reform had been on the agenda for a long time without much concrete to show for all the talk and fine plans. As the World Summit approached, expectations that significant reform was forthcoming gradually evaporated as nation states prioritised differently and UN institutions safeguarded their turf. What ultimately emerged at the World Summit and its immediate aftermath was a compromise solution at various levels.

**Conclusion: delivering for some**

If ‘delivering as one’ was the purpose behind the creation of the PBA, the negotiated outcome fell short of accomplishing that goal. Nor did it, however, translate into ‘delivering for none’. Within a few years a number of programmes were under way, assisting several countries on their long road to post-conflict recovery.

That the new architecture was already treated with some skepticism at the time of its founding is also evident. The PBA was no miracle solution to the complex problems of post-conflict recovery. Nor did anyone view it as such at the time. The bargaining process that resulted in the creation of the PBA was itself evidence of an abundant presence of vested and often conflicting interests. The peacebuilding ‘business’ was already ‘a crowded field’ ten years ago, as one interviewee poignantly remarked. To try to install a new mechanism and structure into this crowded field of UN agencies, NGOs and UN member states was bound to be an uphill struggle. The decade that followed would provide ample evidence of the skepticism directed at the time towards what was, even in 2005, an exercise in piecemeal reform.

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http://www.gpplatform.ch
Peacebuilding:
Evolution, Trends, Visions
Retreat synthesis for the White Paper on Peacebuilding

Achim Wennmann

This paper is a synthesis of a retreat convened by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 5-6 May 2014, Préalpina Hotel, Chexbres, Switzerland.

Introduction

This report summarises a two-day informal retreat that occurred in the framework of the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The retreat was a stocktaking opportunity of the White Paper process and focused on contributions from peacebuilding professionals from the field and different sectors.

The synthesis presented in this report draws on the retreat’s discussions and on several commissioned documents. These documents included: 9 draft regional peacebuilding analyses (Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central America, South America, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, North Africa and Europe); a draft report on the past, present and future of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (prepared by the Centre on International Cooperation of New York University); reports on 4 White Paper consultations; and an analysis of 21 confidential interviews with peacebuilding professionals.

The retreat revealed many divergent perspectives, issues and trends. This report distils this substance into 23 themes as a contribution to reflections on the White Paper on Peacebuilding (see Table 1 for an overview). Overall, the report seeks to represent the full spectrum of views and focuses on overall trends and perceptions at the regional or sub-regional level.

This report is structured along the three objectives of the White Paper on Peacebuilding. The first section looks at the evolution and practice trends of the broader peacebuilding universe. The second section reports on the discussion on UN peacebuilding and its comparative advantage. The third section reflects on several visions for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. Annex 1 and 2 provide details on the programme and list of participants. This report has been drafted under Chatham House Rules.¹

¹ The retreat occurred under Chatham House Rules. Under this rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed as a source of this information.

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:
Evolution and practice trends of the broader peacebuilding universe

1. Building peace – a long tradition

The practice of building peace has long-established roots. Peacebuilding often draws on traditional practices to resolve disputes and conflict, and to promote social harmony. While much of this practice does not use the word ‘peacebuilding’ to describe its activities, it nevertheless understands this practice to be about the use of dialogue, trust-building and consensus-seeking to resolve or manage conflict through non-violent means. In most regions of the world, there are significant capacities and relationships that manage violent and non-violent conflict. In some regions, such capacities and relationships are part of the traditional cultural heritage.

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2. ‘Peacebuilding’ – terminology

The terminology of ‘peacebuilding’ was initially associated with Peace Studies in the 1970s and 1980s. In Peace Studies, the popular distinction between ‘positive’ peace (condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, harmony associated with mature relationships) and ‘negative’ peace (the absence of turmoil, tension, conflict and war) underlines that peacebuilding has been both about ending violent conflict and about building mature relationships to manage and mitigate violent or non-violent conflict.

In the UN system, the 1992 Agenda for Peace introduced the terminology of ‘peacebuilding’ more systematically into UN vocabulary. Prior to the Agenda for Peace, some retreat participants reported from their own experiences that in the early 1990s UN actors would look at ‘peacebuilding’ as something that would be mainly done by non-governmental organisations. But, at the time of the hand-over between Secretary-Generals Perez de Cuellar and Boutros Boutros Ghali, it was recognised that the UN could engage in certain ‘peace inducing’ activities that did not really fall into the UN’s existing ‘peacekeeping’, ‘peacemaking’ or ‘good offices’ roles. Hence the need for a new term that would describe these activities.

3. Future risks to peace – the changing strategic landscape

Over the last few years, present knowledge about future risks to peace has become clearer. Future risks to peace evolve from pressures on dispute resolution systems at all levels (local, national, regional, international). These pressures emerge, for instance, from demographic trends (more people, more old people, more people in cities), economic trends (more uneven growth and inequality), political shifts (diffusion of power, hybrid political orders, less control by states), environmental pressures (more natural disasters) and a changing nature of armed violence (more deaths associated with criminal or non-war violence). These risk factors manifest themselves differently in different context and in some contexts they are already a present reality.

As part of the new strategic landscape there is also a significant diffusion of actors in conflict affected contexts ranging from a diverse array of foreign government departments (e.g. humanitarian, diplomatic, develop, military) or from different sectors (business, civil society, organised crime). Retreat discussions highlighted, however, that the level of diffusion is different across and within regions with some contexts experiencing a high density of actors while others receive hardly any attention. The level of diffusion of actors within conflict-affected societies has made it more difficult to distinguish between who is an insider and who is an outsider. In many contexts, outside actors are so heavily integrated into national political systems that the distinction between insiders or outsiders has become blurred.

Discussions on future risk to peace and changing strategic landscapes also raised the question whether there is a potential gap between existing dispute resolution and peacebuilding capabilities, and future capacity needs to mitigate and manage conflict and risks to peace.

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More work may be needed to substantiate the nature of this gap and what specific types of dispute resolution or peacebuilding practice may need scaling efforts.

4. Peacebuilding practice – constant innovation

Innovation is critical to building peace because peacebuilding practice is constantly required to adapt to changing situations and context dynamics. Over the last decade, innovation in the broader peacebuilding field is illustrated by the practice of national dialogue frameworks, local peace committees, architectures for peace, constitutional review processes or urban safety strategies.\(^8\) Participants noted that connecting practice across contexts and continents can foster important innovation. However, the emphasis is on translating practice that worked elsewhere into a specific local context, and not on the export of ‘blue print’ solutions.

The broader peacebuilding practice has been driven by a diverse set of actors ranging from different government departments, non-governmental organisations, religious groups, companies or local community leaders. Within the UN, peacebuilding practice has been advanced by operational departments or programmes relating to peacekeeping, political affairs, development or operations. In business, focus on non-securitised risk management has become more prominent as part of the strategies to protect key investment assets. The role of the Catholic Church has been particularly important in some Latin American settings. Different faith-based organisations distinguish themselves through their network of grassroots peacebuilders. Retreat participants also highlighted that civil society has played key roles in contexts where the UN has not been able to operate because of capacity or political constraints.

5. Peacebuilding practice – no unified perception

There is a large spectrum of views about what constitutes action that is called ‘peacebuilding’.\(^9\) Peacebuilding can be understood as an umbrella term that shelters various other activities and concepts. It can also be understood as a label for a concrete activity with an associated theory of change. Finally, peacebuilding can be understood as a way of working – meaning specific activities that take account of several key principles.

Peacebuilding practice can mean something different to different policy communities. While perceptions are never uniform in any specific community, there is a tendency that state representatives and officials from international organisations associate peacebuilding practice with the UN, its peacebuilding architecture or operational departments. Retreat participants also underline that many peacebuilding professionals with strong field experience (including many from the UN) distinguish between the community-level, cross-sectorial and bottom-up nature of peacebuilding practice and the politics within the UN related to UN activities that are labelled ‘peacebuilding’.

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The perceptions about the nature of peacebuilding practice also vary between and within regions. For instance, many UN activities and programmes in Africa occur under the label ‘peacebuilding’, while that label is hardly ever used for UN activities in Latin America. Retreat discussions noted that some Latin America governments have reservations about labelling specific UN activities as ‘peacebuilding’, due to fears of outside intervention and internationalising problems related to criminal violence and insecurity. Retreat participants highlighted that in the case of Latin America, the absence of activities labelled ‘peacebuilding’ does not mean that there is no dynamic peacebuilding community in Latin America. In some contexts, this community originated in civil society mobilisation against political and social exclusion and injustice, and violence reduction and prevention, especially in urban environments.

6. Field-level convergence – principles of building peace

Discussions at the retreat suggest that there is some level of convergence about key principles of building peace. Peacebuilding is a profoundly local and a locally-owned effort, is driven largely by national or sub-national actors, networks or institutions, and is something political and multi-dimensional. Peacebuilding cannot be delegated entirely to any specific local, national or international actor – it is a multi-stakeholder and cross-sectorial process that unfolds over sometimes long periods of time. Peacebuilding can also involve targeted international accompaniment – outsiders lending expertise and advice to locally shaped and guided plans and processes. Participants also highlight that the need for dealing with the past and the need for setting the foundations for a better future are often inextricably intertwined, but are addressed differently across contexts. Key issues include the importance of creating jobs to move on after violence and of understanding and recognising the past so as to provide opportunities for community and individual healing.

7. Securitisation – peacebuilding overpowered

In many regions of the world, peacebuilding practice has been overpowered by the discourse and practices of securitised approaches to manage violent and non-violent conflict. This is a significant concern for peacebuilders, who are seeing securitised strategies as a limited way for dealing with underlying risks to peace. While there is a strong evidence base in Latin America that securitised responses have not had the desired effect for armed violence reduction and prevention, retreat participants observed that some of the same type of responses are currently used in different African contexts with potentially similar results of feeding spirals of violence, especially in urban centres.

Some retreat participants also saw that advocacy for non-violent and peaceful responses to crises and conflict is largely overpowered by many government or commercial actors pushing for violent or securitised responses. This is evidenced in many of the fluid conflict and transformation settings in the Middle East and North and West Africa where the export of small arms and military hardware has completely overshadowed investments in non-violent dispute resolution.

The reason for the advocacy asymmetry between the securitisation and peacebuilding practice may be related to the fact that securitised approaches receive a much more consistent lobbying support, backed by political and commercial interests in the defence sector. In comparison, the peacebuilding field has no consistent government or private sector lobby

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support. This has led to arguments that there should be a more serious effort to privatispe peacebuilding (especially through actors based in conflict- and violence-affected contexts) as a means to scale peacebuilding efforts and increase the diffusion of peacebuilding practice in government and business sectors.

Despite the rise of securitised responses, there are defence or military departments of some states that have become more interested in peacebuilding approaches. This has partly been related to the negative experience of an over-reliance on military or securitised strategies and the importance to establish long-term relationships with local communities, especially as part of anti-terror strategies. There is not necessarily a dichotomy between the approaches; rather, it is important to better understand how peacebuilding approaches can or should be integrated into securitised responses. In pursuing closer collaboration, it is important that peacebuilding actors (particularly when they are coming from outside a specific setting) do not become inadvertently associated with groups that espouse overtly securitised responses. This may in turn limit entry points for supporting peacebuilding.

8. Political economy issues

In response to a funding crunch for many country-level programmes, for-profit motives have played a more dominant role for organisations, especially in conflict and post-conflict contexts with significant donor interests. Key trends include the artificial inflation of the range of interventions from local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or UN programmes, and prioritised resource mobilisation to cover overhead costs over delivering on needs and ensuring local ownership. Some participants have also highlighted that some organisations started trying to establish monopolistic control over specific concepts (e.g. peacebuilding, conflict prevention, mediation, resilience) as a means to control an operational space and its associated funding streams.

As a result of these developments, discussions during the retreat suggests that many UN programmes or departments found themselves in the competitive market for the implementation of national or international programmes. In some settings UN actors mobilised their special relationships with donor and host governments to become the ‘partner of choice’ with criteria to award contracts to be mainly dominated by politics. Some retreat participants related stories of the increase of collusion in some contexts, especially between national governments and UN actors to convince donors to fund specific national programmes mainly to assure funding for cash-strapped national government departments and local UN Offices. In a similar way, NGOs have been said to collude with foreign donor agendas by responding to narrow funding incentives, even if these are not necessarily aligned with local peacebuilding needs.

During the retreat, participants questioned the long-term sustainability of UN agencies in the competitive market for programme implementation in the peacebuilding field. They argued that the UN provides services that could be provided by local actors much more cost-effectively, that many UN actors lack a context- and conflict- sensitivity, and that UN actors are too closely aligned with host or donor government interests and thereby distort the peacebuilding space.
2. UN peacebuilding and its comparative advantage

9. Building peace – central to the UN’s founding mandate

Building peace is central to the United Nations and has been one of the principle founding rationales of the UN system. The Preamble of the 1945 UN Charter provides an unequivocal mandate to the United Nations to build peace, especially in order to ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’, ‘to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small’ and ‘to promote social progress and better standards of life’. While the terminology of ‘peacebuilding’ was not used in the Charter, the founding of the UN in the aftermath of the Second World War was a principle reason for its creation, as well as for the creation of many specialised agencies and other international organisations.

10. ‘Peacebuilding’ as UN vocabulary

In 1990s, ‘peacebuilding’ became more systematically integrated into UN vocabulary. The 1992 Agenda for Peace defined peacebuilding as ‘action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’. The Agenda for Peace conceived peacebuilding as part of a sequence of conflict stages that spans from pre-conflict preventive diplomacy to peacemaking to peacekeeping and, ultimately, to ‘post-conflict’ peacebuilding.

The Agenda for Peace had the tendency to relate peacebuilding practice to the aftermath of inter-state and civil wars and to an intellectual tradition of liberal internationalism. For some retreat participants, the association of peacebuilding to liberal internationalism illustrates the deviation of UN peacebuilding from the community level and the historical record of managing violent and non-violent conflict. The association of peacebuilding to liberal internationalism has also led to the perception of some that ‘peacebuilding’ is about outside intervention in their sovereign affairs by the UN or other states.

11. A momentum for peacebuilding – the UN Peacebuilding Architecture

There was momentum for peacebuilding at the time of the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA). This momentum evolved between 2003 and 2005, and was strong with respect to a UN response to build synergies and coherence on peacebuilding, to act as a knowledge hub, and to help facilitate resource mobilisation, strategy and advocacy for specific post-conflict countries. The PBA was also considered a solution for the lack of rapidly available funds that would respond to peacebuilding crises and opportunities, and to promote the coherence of UN and donor performance on the ground.

Support and interest in the PBA declined over time. The CIC-NYU study found that ‘a steady decline in PBC [Peacebuilding Commission] ambition and countries’ interest in it and a growth in prominence of other UN and international actors who are charged with forging international coherence, coupled with low consensus on the strategic vision, objectives and ambition of the PBA within the PBC and the UN system, have become significant factors preventing the PBC and the PBSO [Peacebuilding Support Office] from evolving into a more significant institutional force
beyond the recognised efforts of the individual chairs of the CSCs [Country-Specific Configurations] and the PBF [Peacebuilding Fund].”\textsuperscript{11} 

The PBA also mainly focused on the coherence of peacebuilding within the UN system and in relation to the interests of UN member states, and thereby became increasingly dissociated from broader non-state practice to build peace. As the role of civil society has grown and come to constitute a group of major actors in the peacebuilding field, and no modalities for exchange between the PBA and civil society was included in the design of the PBA, some retreat participants report a disconnect between civil society and UN efforts in the peacebuilding field.

12. The UN and peacebuilding practice

Over the last two decades, peacebuilding has become increasingly integrated into a diversity of UN departments. While the PBA was intended to act in an advisory role for the UN Security Council, the operational dimension of peacebuilding remained under control of the operational departments related to peacekeeping, political affairs and good offices, development and field operations. On the operational front, therefore, peacebuilding has been mainly driven by different UN Departments.

Retreat discussion noted that UN peacebuilding practice relates to the dimensions of the UN as a diplomatic forum of member states and as a body that mobilises member state support ‘to get things done somewhere’. With respect to the operational dimensions, many ‘peace operations’ have been limited to few countries and faces challenges to scaling-up activities. Deployment has also been subject to the consent of key member states leading to inaction in different situations. In some situation this has led to the operational space to be filled by other actors. Some retreat participants also relate stories about the UN’s struggle to remain an accepted peacebuilding actor in many parts of the world, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. What is more, they highlight the vulnerability of UN programmes and agencies to host government consent to activities, which can be particularly sensitive for playing peacebuilding roles. In some contexts, UN agencies adapted to constraints.

Over the last two decades, peacebuilding practice within the UN has evolved. Many activities in the field did not use the label ‘peacebuilding’, but this does not mean that ‘peacebuilding’ practice has stalled within the UN. For instance, retreat participants pointed to the fact that the UN has strengthened its support capacities, especially for governments, regional organisations and a specific constellation of conflict parties. Most of such assistance occurs discretely and is illustrated by the PBC Country Configuration Chairs, the growing number of peace and development advisory, the expert teams of the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, as well as a whole series of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The UN has also embarked on new partnerships with civil society, such as with the International Peacebuilding Advisory Team. One question the retreat discussions posed is how the UN would need to scale and adjust these capacities in order to better respond to the changing nature of conflict and the future risks to peace.

13. Diplomatic accompaniment

As the world’s foremost diplomatic forum of states, the UN can play an important contribution to national political transformation especially through diplomatic accompaniment – similar to the one provided currently by the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission. Such diplomatic

accompaniment can include mediation functions between specific governments and donors, especially to convince governments to adhere to a reform plan and to convince donors to deliver on pledge support. The UN can also serve as a conduit for discrete contacts at the state-level on peacebuilding issues.

14. The UN as convener

Due to its recognition as a representative body of member states, the UN enjoys a certain degree of authority in some contexts when it comes to carrying out peacebuilding roles. In many conflict-affected societies, the UN is seen as a bridge between civil society and the state, often bringing together actors that would not otherwise sit together. But there is also an observable trend in some regions – notably in North Africa and the Middle East – where the UN is struggling to remain perceived as an acceptable partner. This is especially an issue with the large youth populations in these countries. In some South American contexts, the convening role of the United Nations has been limited due to the perception that it was too close to the interests of certain member states – hence underlining the strategic tension between the UN Secretary-General’s Good Offices mandate and the interests of key UN member states. In contexts where the UN’s convening capacity is limited, other non-state actors without an apparent agenda in a specific conflict have frequently acted as conveners.

15. Technical assistance and logistical support

Over the last decade the UN has also developed specific technical assistance capacities to assist countries and societies to address their own peacebuilding challenges. For instance and joint efforts of UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) can deploy Peace and Development Advisors, and DPA’s Mediation Support Unit represents a standing technical capacity for peace processes. Through, its governance work, UNDP has provided critical support to national and sub-national institutions by providing technical assistance for infrastructures for peace. It has also assisted local actors in designing, implementing and monitoring armed violence reduction and prevention programmes. UNHABITAT has increasingly networked its urban safety experience with city administrations, for example through the Global Network on Safer Cities. By supporting regional and sub-regional actors to engage with different national partners, the UN can help strengthen the sustainability and coherence of peacebuilding efforts. An often overlooked fact is that in many countries with major infrastructure or communication challenges, the UN has been providing critical transport and logistical support for a range of peacebuilding efforts. A critical challenge for the UN’s peace-inducing activities is their ability to scale-up and therefore approximate capacity more closely to the needs for assistance.

16. Field-headquarters dynamics

There has also been a large difference on the UN’s peacebuilding role among headquarters and field office staff. More independence from headquarters for country offices meant a much more flexible approach to peacebuilding challenges and the possibility to think outside the UN box to devise ingenious strategies. Some retreat participants noted that many peacebuilding professionals frequently observe that the UN is most successful when there was initiative on the part of local UN leadership, even if this meant operating outside the bounds of a country plan. But, some participants also felt that there was a trend to discourage leadership towards more bureaucratic disciplining.
3. Visions for building peace

17. Rehabilitating the practice of building peace

One of the outcomes of the retreat has been a shared feeling that there is a need to rehabilitate the practice of building peace. There are many practitioner stories about a gap between the local needs for building peace and what international organisations and donors supply to build peace. The practice of peacebuilding within the UN system has also led to a perception of peacebuilding as an ‘outside intervention’ through ‘missions’ or ‘programmes’, and that peacebuilding mainly occurs at the level of states and international organisations. This perception does not coincide with large parts of peacebuilding practice, including its community-based, multi-stakeholder, context-sensitive, inclusive and bottom-up nature. One way to advance a rehabilitation of peacebuilding practice could be to develop key principles of building peace that clarify the key attributes of peacebuilding practice, as well as the different roles of actors in peacebuilding processes.

18. Preparing the UN to address future risks to peace

Is the UN ‘fit for purpose’ in the peacebuilding field? Is it fit to address future risks to peace? What will be its specific role in addressing future risks to peace? Given the current tensions between major UN member states, no significant structural reforms are likely to be forthcoming soon. In previous decades, it was possible to advance major reforms in periods of a relative convergence of interests among UN members states, as illustrated by the 1992 Agenda for Peace, which remains the cornerstone for the UN’s present day institutional design.

Since 1992, the world around the UN has changed and the risks to peace are largely different from those over 20 years ago. The retreat highlighted that other international organisations – notably the World Bank – are showing that major institutional adjustments are necessary and possible. Given the significance of the changing future risks to peace, a limited discussion on the reforms of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture may miss the point to address the organisational barriers within the UN to becoming better prepared to face the future landscape of conflict and insecurity.

Some retreat participants highlighted that without institutional change, the UN may become increasingly less important in helping others strengthen their capacities and relationships to building peace, and less connected to the practical cutting edge in this field. Without institutional change, the UN may also become more associated with merely occupying a bureaucratic space in the peacebuilding field, rather than with performing the functions for

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which it has been created – a tendency that has been well documented in scholarship about the UN.¹⁴

19. Bridging the gap between demand and supply for peacebuilding support

A recurring story of peacebuilding professionals is that the supply of international peacebuilding assistance does not necessarily coincide with what is really needed for sustainable local peacebuilding.¹⁵ They also report that much official peacebuilding assistance has been captured by national political elites or by UN funds and programmes, especially assistance focused on institution or state building. Support for strengthening relationships between key states, civil society or political parties has been much needed in many contexts, but much less frequently supported. For instance, the ‘statebuilding’ focus in peacebuilding has largely focused on institutional designs – sometimes ill-suited to managing existing political orders – but has neglected the support of political parties as broad based, participatory political platforms that can contribute to a more inclusive representation in domestic politics.

20. Peacebuilding as accompaniment

Building peace is a local effort driven through processes that are locally-owned and determined by the constellation of actors, power and dynamics unique to a specific context. What practice over the last 25 years has shown is that a wholesale export of a specific outside model of peacebuilding or state building has not always been conducive to establishing sustainable peace – on the contrary, in some contexts foreign dominated reform agendas have increased risks to peace. Some actors in peacebuilding contexts are becoming tired of ‘post-colonial’ attitudes of UN actors and donors.

Assistance to building peace is much more about accompaniment of local actors building peace – lending expertise and advice to locally-shaped and guided plans and processes. More work is necessary to understand the workings of accompaniment, especially with respect to differentiated roles and responsibilities. For instance, diplomatic accompaniment of governments could be channelled via the PBC, but accompaniment of discrete processes is mainly the domain of private mediators. Moreover, professional networks have been more flexible and independent than state-based institutions to provide accompaniment with expertise.

Another question is ‘who will be accompanied?’ with a possible answer pointing to strengthen accompaniment of local change-makers. These are individuals with a strong risk-taking and leadership profile, who are networked across political, social or commercial stakeholders.

21. Multi-stakeholder frameworks for inclusive peacebuilding

Building peace is a multi-dimensional and multi-sectorial challenge, but most UN peacebuilding support has focused on the state-level and the UN system. To enhance the inclusiveness and sustainability of peace, there needs to be much stronger cross-sectorial working modalities. At present, the PBA has remained largely closed to participation from actors outside the UN system. For instance, there are no formal mechanisms for inclusion of civil society or business actors. In comparison, the Human Rights Council – created around the same time as the PBA – has much more inclusive ways of working.

Also in the field, more work is needed to test the working modalities of multi-stakeholder action frameworks for inclusive peacebuilding. Such action frameworks connect to the rational of the broader peacebuilding space to be composed of multiple and sometimes overlapping political processes with different constituencies. Multi-stakeholder design allows for inclusive peacebuilding reaching out to all-important stakeholders, which can include difficult actors. They can also include politically or economically marginalised segments of society. While important progress has been made in practice of national dialogues, architectures for peace, or constitutional reviews, more work is needed to develop a better understanding of roles and responsibilities of different actors.

22. Representation and political parties

Retreat participants highlighted that there are hardly any visions for the development of political parties that can participate in more consensual and representative domestic politics and political institutions. Channelling outside peacebuilding assistance to a mosaic of local governmental or non-governmental organisations has, in most cases, not been conducive to the development of new political parties that can consistently participate in a political arena and negotiate political transitions. In Latin America, peacebuilding professionals observe a feeling of an ever more reduced participatory political space and that mainstream political parties are no longer related to representing the will or interests of different segments of society, but about protecting vested interest in a state’s major financial or natural resource assets.

23. Peacebuilding financing

At present, there is no integrated analysis and monitoring of patterns and flows of peacebuilding funding. While such an effort would involve a significant methodological and data collection effort, it would be important to identify current trends and gaps. Key questions could be: What are the key trends and patterns of peacebuilding funding? What is peacebuilding funding globally? Who pays for what in peacebuilding? What range of activities fall under ‘peacebuilding’ from a funding perspective? What is the ratio of funding of peacebuilding within the UN system versus outside the UN system?

This effort could be inspired by the efforts in the humanitarian field on ‘preparedness funding’ or by the annual statistics on the flows of development aid. A better understanding of the spectrum of peacebuilding support could also be to establish a baseline as a reference for assessments on trends in peacebuilding financing.

There is also more innovation in peacebuilding financing needed. The retreat found that many peacebuilding professionals think that the model of funding peacebuilding through external donor support or funds will become increasingly unsustainable in the future. Not only may foreign funds dry up in times of budget constraints, they also contribute to a distortion of the peacebuilding space, especially by providing incentives for specific peacebuilding approaches that may be ill-suited for a specific context. The reliance on outside support can also reduce the long-term prospects of a peacebuilding, prevention and violence reduction efforts, because it tends to reduce the ownership of these efforts by local actors. Issues of control of financing mechanisms are extremely context specific and require a good understanding of the political economy of a specific context.

24. Towards peacebuilding sensitivity

There is no shortage of conflict analysis tools for peacebuilding contexts. But there seems to be a tendency that these tools focus more on the conflict than on opportunities for building peace.
As a result there is more emphasis on structured responses to conflict prevention or violence reduction, than on drivers for peace and needs for capacity and relationship-building. While in the development sector, ‘conflict sensitivity’ has become a standard part of the analytical inventory, more work may be necessary to identify what ‘peacebuilding sensitivity’ would mean – perhaps a shorthand for the principles to consider for national or international programmes that occur in the context of (violent) political transformations or transitions. Better understanding of ‘peacebuilding sensitivity’ could have a potential impact in many different sectors, including for instance trade, labour, humanitarian assistance or human rights.

**Annex 1: Programme**

**Sunday, 4 May 2014**

Afternoon – arrival of participants  
19.00 – Welcome Dinner

**Monday, 5 May 2014**

10.00 Introductions & scene setting  
10.30 Session 1: Group work on key retreat objectives  
12.00 Lunch  
14.00 Session 2: The broader peacebuilding universe  
15.30 Break  
16.00 Session 3: Situating UN peacebuilding within this broader peacebuilding universe  
17.30 Free time  
19.00 Dinner

**Tuesday, 6 May 2014**

9.00 Session 4: Visions for building peace  
10.30 Break  
11.00 Session 5: The 10 year review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture: Past, present, future  
12.30 Lunch  
14.00 Session 6: Review, gaps, next steps  
16.00 Departure

**Annex 2: Participants**

1. Andrea Aeby, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to UN, Geneva, Switzerland
2. Souhail Belhadj, Research Associate, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland
3. Antonio Bernales, Executive Director, Futuro Sostenible, Lima, Perú
4. Susanna Campbell, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland
6. Caty Clément, Senior Programme Advisor and Senior Fellow, Leadership, Crisis and Conflict Management Programme, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Geneva, Switzerland
7. Brian Ganson, Centre of African Dispute Settlement, Stellenbosch Business School, Cape Town, South Africa
8. Rita Grünenfelder, Political Affairs Officer, United Nations and International Organisations Division, Directorate of Political Affairs, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
9. Diane Hendrick, Representative Peace and Disarmament, Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, Switzerland
10. Jok Madut Jok, Co-founder, The Sudd Institute (South Sudan), Los Angeles, USA
11. Anne Kahl, Programme Specialist, Conflict Prevention, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA
12. Donato Kiniger-Passigli, Coordinator, Fragile States and Disaster Response, ILO, Geneva Switzerland
13. Alejandra Kubitschek Bujones, Program Officer, NYU Center on International Cooperation, New York, USA
14. Lawrence Lachmansingh, Peace and Governance Advisor, UNDP Accra, Ghana
15. Renée Larivièvre, Deputy Director-General for Development and Learning, Interpeace, Geneva, Switzerland
17. Sabine Meitzel, Trade Development Consultant, horizon2030, Switzerland
18. Angela Rivas, Coordinador, Private Sector, Conflict and Peacebuilding, Fundación Ideas para la Paz, Bogota, Colombia
19. Julian Schweitzer, Consultant, Fragile States and Disaster Response, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland
20. Mirjana Spoljaric, Deputy Head of United Nations and International Organizations Division, Directorate of Political Affairs, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
21. Caroline Tissot, Programme Manager, Post-Conflict Transition (Recovery and Peacebuilding), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, Global Institutions Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
22. Andrew Tomlinson, Director & Quaker UN Representative, Quaker United Nations Office, New York, USA
23. Achim Wennmann, Executive Coordinator, Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, Geneva, Switzerland

About the author: Dr. Achim Wennmann is Executive Coordinator of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, and Researcher at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

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Disclaimer: All views expressed in this article are the views of the rapporteurs and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, or the four Platform partners: the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP); the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO).

About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.
Operational Field Perspectives on Peacebuilding

Louis Hoffmann

Introduction*

With some 50 million people forcibly displaced in 2013, and increasingly protracted conditions of conflict and displacement, peacebuilding continues to play a significant role in work to address root causes and impacts of conflict and violence at the field level. For organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for instance, sustainably resolving displacement is a prerequisite to, and a core hallmark of, sustainable peace. In fact, sustainably resolving displacement and achieving durable peace are mutually dependent. As such, the current levels of protracted displacement do not bode well for the current state of peacebuilding.

Drawing on the author’s operational experience from around the world, this paper aims to provide a field-driven, bottom-up perspective on current peacebuilding efforts. In particular, this paper focuses on three specific gaps:

- Enhancing local engagement through improved vertical integration of peacebuilding efforts;
- Meeting humanitarian needs as a core foundation for building peace with an improved focus on horizontal integration of humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts; and
- Recognizing the challenges inherent in the complex dynamics of criminal violence.

* This paper is based on the presentation “IOM Operational Field Perspectives on Peacebuilding” delivered at the Annual Meeting 2014 of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (Geneva, 21 November, 2014). The opinions in this paper do not necessarily represent official IOM views and are the sole responsibility of the author.
Background

The number of forcibly displaced persons continues to grow and the reality of global displacement is increasingly complex. The number of people displaced by violence and conflict today is the highest since World War II. By the end of 2013, 33.3 million persons were internally displaced by conflict and violence, a 16 per cent increase from 2012; while another 16.7 million were classified as refugees. More concerning, the average period people live in displacement is currently a staggering 17 years.

As an example, there were 12.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in sub-Saharan Africa in 2013, the largest ‘regional accounting’ of IDPs globally, and constituting more than one third of the world’s total. Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan make up the largest populations of these IDPs, followed by Iraq, Somalia and the Central African Republic (CAR). Examples of the main causes of displacement in sub-Saharan Africa include “struggles for political power, extremist violence, disputes over natural resources and inter-communal violence that was often linked to land.”

In addition, there are currently nine UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) missions in Africa (Western Sahara, CAR, Mali, DRC, Darfur, Abyei, Liberia, South Sudan, and Cote d’Ivoire). Peacebuilding therefore clearly represents a large institutional commitment by the United Nations, host governments and the member states that support these interventions.

The operational work of peacebuilding occurs nationally, locally and at individual levels and requires a perspective of, if not engagement with, all three levels simultaneously. Generally, peacebuilding practice builds on incremental successes and consistently re-visits objectives, project design and focus. This requires not only sustained commitment but also agility, flexibility and a heightened tolerance for risk – none of which are necessarily hallmarks of large, institutional approaches.

At the same time, conflict is spreading rather than disappearing and thus there is much work to be done. In a context of more diffuse, non-traditional dimensions of conflict; in a world of heightened access to media and technology; and in a world over-wrought with large-scale disaster response (no fewer than four L3 responses ongoing simultaneously in 2014, in addition to the global response to the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease) the international community is left with little time to invest in the bubbling sources of future conflict, or to identify new issues on the horizon.

Reflecting on current institutional commitments to peacebuilding from a field programming perspective, a key challenge has been ‘how to bring good local practice to scale in sufficient

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5 The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) defines Level 3 (L3) emergencies as “major sudden onset humanitarian crises triggered by natural disasters or conflict which require system-wide mobilization” IASC, Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency Activation: definition and procedures, IASC Working Group paper, March 2012.
force to reverse the momentum of today’s conflict, while ensuring systemic coherence and synchronicity of effort’. This is the first of three challenges, identified as gaps, that improved practice in peacebuilding should seek to address in operational contexts ahead.

**Vertical integration of peacebuilding efforts**

The first gap to address is the vertical integration of peacebuilding efforts, by recognizing and achieving more systemic coherence at the national, local community and individual levels. There is increasingly a need to better tie in national political processes and UN mission mandates with local peacebuilding activities and local actors.

Out of some necessity and with important advantages, key elements of today’s peacebuilding architecture have become large, institutionally-driven processes. Yet, from the operational perspective, peacebuilding is very much a local enterprise: good programming aims to be inclusive, self-sustaining and, most of all, invested at a local level where peace dividends pay off and contribute to political consensus and social cohesion. However, at the country level, bringing good, locally-oriented peacebuilding efforts ‘to scale’ in the complex universe of UN peace operations is not only very challenging but indicates where some fundamental elements of the approach need to change. While bureaucracies tend to grow static and self-reinforcing, conflict on the other hand is highly adaptive and more diffuse, and this provides an important indication of how the assistance community must focus its peacebuilding tools and interventions.

The growing complexity of the political processes designed to resolve conflict are a direct reflection of the dynamism and fluidity of conflict, and further highlights the important challenge of identifying primary sources of conflict as the core of a sustainable peacebuilding strategy. The complexity of these processes can be observed, amongst others, by cases wherein ethnic and religious themes, as a political characterization of conflict, often mask the true root causes of conflict. Years of investment in many conflict areas tells us that the true root causes are more likely to relate to governance, access to justice and distribution of natural resources. The challenges and the subject matter of resolving conflict are dynamic, and thus a question to be raised is how institutions can or should adapt to match these challenges for future peacebuilding efforts.

We should avoid that our well-intended efforts at systemic coherence amongst peacebuilding actors actually result in larger, heavier systems and processes, including those for funding, programme design and delivery. Peacebuilding therefore requires a continually improving understanding of how to identify and address source issues and the origins of conflict. This is distinct from recent tendencies to integrate peacebuilding efforts with top-down approaches and larger institutional structures. With so much authority emanating, frequently, from UN Mission mandates and the crowded contexts of operational actors (UN and non-UN), it can be difficult for important pieces of the peacebuilding community to see –let alone invest in – the value of a local approach and an optimal treatment of the source issues of conflict.

The recent evolution of conflict and concurrent demands for earlier engagement to protect rights and foster peace demonstrates the need for a better ability to address the source issues and stay ahead of the dynamics of today’s conflict. Intrastate state conflict, and non-state armed actors are increasingly the norm in today’s contexts, with attendant challenges to international intervention and humanitarian law. Further, the state of communications and technology provides not only innovative avenues for assistance delivery but, at a more rapid rate, it also coalesces smaller groups and broader agendas into conflict; heightens the visibility
and impact of smaller armed groups; and generally adds to state fragility at a greater rate than the international community seems able to address conflict-induced need.

It is not only expensive to respond to conflict in this way, but also indicates that governments, agencies and organizations must be better outfitted to recognize and address the source issues of conflict and to do so earlier – source issues such as natural resources including land and property, access to basic services, access to justice and preservation of rights. Better addressing these phenomena requires both early engagement in addressing potential conflict sources, and a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding.

From an operational perspective, and in the face of more unwieldy institutional approaches to peacebuilding, the international community needs to re-focus on giving more credit and credence to three operational aspects of building peace at the field level: greater agility of instruments supporting peacebuilding, greater flexibility in programmes designed to drive transformation out of conflict, and a higher appetite for risk at the programming level. These are traits in which the larger institutional structures of peacebuilding must increase value for investment, and lend more prominence in the development of strategies to build resilience and peace from the bottom-up.

**Meeting humanitarian need as a core foundation for building peace**

The second gap to address is the necessity of meeting humanitarian need as a core foundation for building peace. The attendant challenge is to better synchronize the efforts of the international community toward a closer confluence of humanitarian and peacebuilding activities. Successful peacebuilding interventions are founded on certain essential preconditions that are necessary in some substantive degree for peace to take root. These include, for instance, law and order, security, respect for rights and meeting basic human need. Several of these areas are already the integrated focus of many peacebuilding initiatives but meeting priority needs through principled humanitarian action is a distinct course of assistance with respect to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence – and must rightly remain so in the more political environments of peacebuilding.

Conflict contexts pose a great deal of risk to assistance actors, and credibility with all sides in a conflict is essential to meeting the greatest humanitarian need and to doing so safely. The programming goals of those operating within the framework of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence pose some distinct differences and challenges to the goals of the peacebuilding community, which tends to prioritize a distinctly different set of factors in its actions. For example, peacebuilding actions tend to base engagement more on political relevance than humanitarian need; to be inclusive of armed groups – including where relevant criminal gangs; and to be extremely adaptive in its approaches in ways that humanitarian delivery cannot often afford.

Although this is not an innovative observation, reality still indicates that the international community collectively needs to better link humanitarian delivery and peacebuilding initiatives, and to find practical ways forward to comprehensively deliver both peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance. Better interaction and improved ‘tolerance’ of these distinct agendas is necessary alongside the recognition of the mutual importance of both activities – meeting humanitarian need, and – as importantly – working to resolve the core drivers of that need.

The international community is well past a linear approach to relief and development, and must recognize the fluidity of transition and conflict transformation. Because humanitarian need and
transition from conflict so often occur simultaneously – and may ‘co-occur’ repeatedly throughout prolonged conflict and transitional contexts – it should be an accepted standard to coordinate and synergize the importance of humanitarian needs-based programming alongside the engagement and the risk-taking necessary to address root cause issues and build peace. Addressing fundamental humanitarian need is very much a prerequisite for building peace.

Conflict-affected populations must be capable of focusing on peace, investing in peace, and delivering on peace. In order to want peace, individuals and communities must be free from other wants such as impediments to food, water, hygiene and health.

In many local interventions, much of this work is successfully combined, for instance by building on humanitarian programme delivery to build ‘constituencies’ for peace as well as to inform the design of follow-on peacebuilding initiatives. But there remain deep cultural divides between the communities, despite the shared objectives. As the international community looks to review peacebuilding architecture, we need to systematically continue to look for creative ways of bringing information-sharing, conceptual exchanges, and situational assessments into the joint work of the humanitarian and peacebuilding communities.

Complex dynamic of criminal violence

The third gap addressed in this paper is a call for greater action with respect to criminal violence. There are few specific answers, but – from a displacement perspective – criminal violence is a growing factor in peacebuilding and more work is needed to better understand synergies with, and the related effects of, peacebuilding practice and criminal violence. As part of a systematic response, more urgent work is needed in developing operational methodologies for engaging actors and building peace in violent and crime-affected contexts. Conflict and criminal violence are increasingly sharing effects on the displacement scale, and so we must look more concerted at highlighting the distinct challenges and potential synergies of addressing criminal violence as a ‘root cause’ issue for peacebuilding.

From the perspective of peacebuilding, there is therefore a need to improve the understanding of the dynamics between conflict-related violence and criminal violence, as well as a distinct need to develop tools at all levels to address criminal violence as an equivalent challenge to state stability and citizen security. A growing body of field practice suggests that community and individual empowerment is essential to addressing violence, including criminal violence. At the same time, traditional peacebuilding approaches – including use of tools such as access to livelihoods, income generation, and education – are not likely to address sufficiently the source issues of criminal conflict.

With a growing number of people impacted by criminal violence, the peacebuilding community must better incorporate both the potential effect of criminal ‘off-shoots’ of conflict-related peace processes while developing a better set of tools for engaging organized criminal actors in order to build sustainable peace. These challenges provide a new and necessary dimension to the scope of peacebuilding and to ongoing considerations for a better architecture for peacebuilding practice.
Closing

Field practice for peacebuilding is constantly evolving based on context and, as such, remains a valuable source of input for a review of the broader architecture and for future success in peacebuilding. From this perspective, much of the challenge to more effective peacebuilding lies in integrating actors and institutions, vertically and horizontally, to achieve greater effect. More specifically, this means accurately assessing and efficiently addressing root cause issues at a rate that is greater than the destructive effects and spread of conflict witnessed by the international community in recent years. Responding to the course of conflict in places like Syria and the Central African Republic, where there has been greater humanitarian need with every new outbreak of violence episode and each new stage of conflict, is no longer sustainable for the international assistance community. Limited assistance dollars mean the need to improve the efficacy of interventions, while better identifying and addressing future sources of conflict. And there are yet new challenges to peacebuilding that will also require widening perspectives and tools of engagement to include criminal agendas in the peacebuilding arena, in addition to the development of new tools that will effectively mitigate, if not substantially extinguish, widespread organized criminal violence as a growing threat to individuals, communities and states.

About the author: Louis Hoffmann is Head of the Transition and Recovery Division in the Department of Operations and Emergencies of the International Organization for Migration in Geneva where he focuses on issues of post-crisis recovery, durable solutions, community stabilization and peacebuilding. He previously served as a liaison with the United States Government for the Organization’s emergency and post-conflict operations worldwide. Louis Hoffmann has an extensive field background, having served in Sudan, in the capacity of Darfur Coordinator prior to becoming Head of Office to South Sudan in 2005, where he directed the Organization’s IDP and community recovery programmes. Since joining IOM in 1999, Louis has also held posts in Serbia, Afghanistan, Austria, East Timor, and Macedonia covering a range of programming activities including return and reintegration programming for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees, assistance to demobilized ex-combatants, community reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, as well as ‘out-of-country’ voting. Louis joined IOM with a background in the resettlement of refugees.

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New Technologies: The Future of Alternative Infrastructures for Peace

Helena Puig Larrauri, Rodrigo Davies, Michaela Ledesma, Jennifer Welch

Introduction

The past decade has seen a rapid expansion of information, communication and networking technologies. This paper explores the processes that are being set in motion in the peacebuilding space by this technological growth. It describes three examples of processes that are affected by new technologies: early warning, dialogue and civil society networks. The changes enabled by technology in these processes present networked, decentralized alternatives to established frameworks, and are beginning to exert some pressure on incumbent systems and stakeholders.

This transformation of citizen-led initiatives is critical as we consider the future of peacebuilding. As alternative infrastructures promoting citizen-to-citizen solutions emerge, how will institutions remain relevant? Can this alternative method of getting something done not only get it done, but also exert influence on an existing, sometimes broken, method? We argue that the peacebuilding sector has the opportunity to engage with and support the growth of these so-called ‘alternative infrastructures’ so as to complement incumbent approaches.

To do so, communities must shape their priorities around for whom, by whom and how peace is built. Rather than dictating such priorities, peacebuilding organizations must focus programming on creating an enabling environment for an organic process to happen in a constructive and participatory manner. While this may seem like an uncertain, radical future, it is the natural corollary of giving millions of people access to new ways of gaining information, communicating their views and building networks from this greater understanding of their ability to affect change.
The future is already here

Science-fiction author William Gibson once said: “The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed.”\(^1\) The insights of this paper are drawn from observations made by the Build Up team in their work to organize the Build Peace conference and support the community that is forming around it. These insights reflect the seeds of the future that we see at the intersection of technology, civic engagement and peacebuilding.

In essence, new technologies play three essential functions in social change processes. They enable new ways to manage information, allow for new ways to communicate, and create networks in new ways. In all three functions, new technologies offer possibilities for peacebuilders to increase their reach and impact, overcoming both resource and operational barriers. Surely, these functions existed before, but now it is possible to use them in new ways that are transformational. So how do these three functions operate?

First, more people are able to access and interpret large amounts of data, and doing so in new ways. The Open Data movement\(^2\) has pushed for public sharing of information by organizations - governments, non-profits and companies - to allow for public scrutiny and transparent accountability. Furthermore, the increasing availability of free, open source and user-friendly information technologies is allowing a growing number of civic actors to collect, process and analyse their own data.

Second, growing numbers of people have access to communication channels that they never had before, particularly through mobile phones. Not only is it much harder for communities to be kept in the dark; when used well, new communication channels enable knowledge and ideas to reach and circulate among populations in ways that are meaningful and durable. The power of decentralised communications is evident both in how fast both hate speech and counter-campaigns can spread over online media.

Third, new technologies provide tools to create networks in ways that were not possible before. This allows activists to build organizations that function like networks by using open data and information technologies to remain responsive to circumstances and to empower many individuals to take independent, creative action towards a shared goal. There is great power in organizing through decentralised, network-based technologies, as demonstrated by violent non-state actors and non-violent political activists alike.

The critical thread that links these three functions is the move to distributed processes. New technologies encourage decentralization and distribution of knowledge. This trend offers three particular provocations to peacebuilding practice which we will unpack below.

- If we know that neglect of marginalised groups is most likely to occur in systems where information is tightly controlled, projects to promote peace should connect with its stakeholders in a highly flexible and transparent way.
- If the most effective forms of hate speech are those easy to replicate and share, the same is the case for messages advocating positive behaviour change.
- If some of the most dangerous groups in the world use decentralisation powered by information technologies to leverage a multiplicity of parallel actions in their favour, then peacebuilding should not impose singular ideas or processes either.

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\(^1\) Gibson can be heard making this statement during a 1999 interview on National Public Radio. The sentence has since been quoted widely, see here for reference: http://quoteinvestigator.com/2012/01/24/future-has-arrived/

\(^2\) For general reference, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_data
Community data and early warning

Are local communities empowered or disempowered to prevent conflict by technology-enabled early warning systems?

A growing number of governmental and non-governmental organizations make use of new information technologies to include local voices in early warning systems. In Kenya, a group of technologists and civic activists built Ushahidi in 2008 in response to post-election violence. The platform allowed the public to tell and record the story of violence as they saw it on the ground. It has since been deployed in hundreds of different contexts to support early warning. Similar projects that incorporate crowd-sourced or crowd-seeded reporting abound in conflict prevention programming. Recently, a new strand of early warning systems are attempting to integrate “big data” feeds - whether from social media or from digital media repositories such as GDELT. These big data sources act as a “passive pulse” of people’s views - gathering opinions and concerns that are not directly solicited.

While opening up early warning processes to hear local voices is an important first step, it is mostly extractive and does not consider accountability from responders. In fact, lack of response to reports plagues many early warning systems - with increased data, institutions often do not have the bandwidth to respond adequately. Partly in response to this failure, some organizations have used technology to increase participation in early warning. The Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA) works with conflict-prone communities along migratory routes in Darfur and has identified that enhancing information flows can help prevent conflict by allowing for collective early responses to emerging tensions. The NGO has been running a community communications system that combines SMS and radio to share information along the migratory routes, and has recorded the overwhelmingly positive experiences of collective action that emerge from this shared information source. Just as collective intelligence can help positive collective action, it can also aid violent collective actions: calls to violent action spread faster over mobile phones and the internet. In Kenya, local peacebuilders use the same tools as violent groups to counter negative campaigns by mobilizing collective expression of positive messaging. The NGO Sisi Ni Amani runs the PeaceTXT program, which aims to contact people in areas at risk in order to propose a moment of reflection at critical times when calls to violence are spreading. Community informers identify such critical times and report to the Sisi Ni Amani team, which then sends out a targeted SMS to interrupt escalation.

The ability to collect information from many people can result in a disempowerment of communities through extractive early warning processes. On the other hand, the ability to share information with more people can empower communities to come up with more effective and creative solutions for collective action to prevent conflict. If we think of how Ushahidi (feedback on violence) compares to PeaceTXT (crowd sourced peace messaging) it becomes clear that the key difference is not the technology that enables access to information, but rather how citizens organize to take action based on this information.

Social media and social cohesion

Are peace activists aided or hindered by social media in promoting social cohesion and reconciliation?

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3 The Global Database on Events, Location and Tone (GDELT) is a freely available database that monitors the world’s news media in print, broadcast, and web formats, in over 100 languages, with daily updates.
In many conflict situations, the prevailing socially normative or state-sanctioned discourse does not promote social cohesion or reconciliation. When communications have few channels, it is easier to control this discourse and dismiss challengers. As digital communications - and particularly social media - grow, it becomes hard to control dissenting or alternative discourses. An increasing number of peace activists are using this to their advantage. The Peace Factory is a non-profit organization promoting peace in the Middle East by making connections between people on Facebook. The Peace Factory runs viral campaigns on Facebook that encourage people to post messages of love and friendship across conflict barriers, as for instance between Israel and Iran, Palestine and Israel, Pakistan and Israel and America and Iran. The group also leads a number of online and offline initiatives, including a matching system called “Friend me for Peace” that encourages Facebook “friending” across conflict divides.4

But not all viral campaigns build on what connects people. There are plenty of hate speech campaigns that spread like wildfire over social media. For instance, Islamic State - also know as ‘ISIS’ - uses social media channels to both spread its message and recruit fighters. Furthermore, there is evidence that communicating over social media may actually promote polarization of debates. Analysis of hashtags on Twitter to look at the distribution of tweets shows that most people are only connected with topics and people they already agree with, and that very little tweeting happens across more than one controversial hashtag. Ethan Zuckerman has also pointed out that an over-reliance on Facebook can result in homophily - we like certain people or issues, and the ones we do not like disappear from our news feed.5

Peace activists can create viral peace campaigns while violent actors can spread hate speech widely, but regardless of the message it may be just preaching to the choir. The key to use social media to build on what connects people is to use it not just to reach more people, but to reach different people; to find - as the Peace Factory attempts to do - ways to connect across conflict lines.

Virtual networks and civil society

Can an alternative architecture for peace emerge from digital or virtual civil society networks?

During the Tunisian revolution, a graffiti reading “Merci le Peuple, Merci Facebook” became famous. There is no doubt that social media played an important role in helping activists network during the Arab Spring. In fact, all around the world virtual civil society networks use technology to remain responsive to circumstances and take independent, creative action towards shared goals. Some commentators have overemphasized the ability of social media to build resilient networks for civil resistance. Some detractors of virtual networks speak of “clicktivism”, the notion that partaking in virtual networks might give would-be activists a false sense of participating in a social change movement.

The balance may be somewhere in the middle. New technologies provide networked, distributed alternatives to organizing that create new civil society structures that work for social change and peace. However, these virtual networks are not always resilient. They may appear and disappear quickly, in part because the cost to set them up is low. That is also what makes them more flexible and responsive to sudden events. Their strength is also their weakness.

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4 For information on The Peace Factory, see : http://thepeacefactory.org/
5 On homophily, see for example: http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/blog/2008/04/25/homophily-serendipity-xenophilia/
Challenges to engaging alternative infrastructures

The examples above all demonstrate different results of technology on peacebuilding practice. They also have something in common: they illustrate that as citizens realise the creative power of decentralised structures that technology enables, they take action in ways that seem to challenge existing organizational models. In other words, we see the emergence of alternative infrastructures: new methods and practices being created by groups for whom existing methods are not working satisfactorily.

What do we mean by infrastructure in this context? Daniel Kreiss describes infrastructure as “the technical artefacts, organizational forms, and social practices that provide background contexts for action.” In other words, it is a mix of technical, organizational and social factors that come together to provide a basis for action, and a framework for getting things done. Some of the features of these alternative infrastructures that help us identify them are the facts that they grow organically, tend to be ad-hoc and temporary in nature, have distributed decision-making processes, and are transferrable across cultural contexts.

Certainly, the future promised by that these alternative infrastructures also presents three important challenges that the development sector will need to address. First, access to information technologies, digital communications and virtual networks is by no means equal. The unequal spread of technological opportunities creates the potential for great inequalities in the use of those opportunities.

Second, the proliferation of opportunities for individuals to create new narratives and highlight fresh stories may lead to the fragmentation of narratives in a given situation. Participants and stakeholders alike may feel confused by the array of voices they hear, and face difficulties judging the veracity and strength of different arguments. This is a challenging issue, but it is also not a new one as every community and context has a plethora of competing and conflicting narratives. While in the past these narratives may have been parsed and simplified by particular actors (often with the best of intentions), their true complexity is no longer hidden by these processes.

Third, in repressive societies, it can be difficult for citizen-led initiatives to complement and work with existing institutions as alternative infrastructures that push for democratic change can be highly destabilizing. In such contexts, encouraging complementary infrastructures to become more stabilizing may render them meaningless to social change if rights and freedoms are not being respected by institutions. This may at times require civic actors to continue working through alternative infrastructures and accept temporary instability in the pursuit of positive social change.

From alternative to complementary infrastructures

Understanding the mechanisms by which new technologies affect peacebuilding processes is not an academic endeavour. It is critically important to peacebuilding programming and to the future of peace processes. As communities build on information technologies, communicate in new ways, and build on both to create new networks for peacebuilding, civic engagement and social impact, the picture for the peacebuilding field becomes inexorably more complex. It also demands greater responsibility and engagement from peacebuilding professionals to

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understand the changing landscape, incorporate new practices, and help co-create the new future of peacebuilding with a broader-than-ever set of stakeholders. Through the alternative infrastructures for peace enabled by technology, a new type of citizenship emerges that is more concerned about fostering relations and taking action with other citizens than building relations with organizations and participating in institutional processes. These alternative infrastructures are beginning to exert some pressure on those established processes, but remain fundamentally outside the sphere of established ideas.

There is an emerging and fundamental tension between these alternative infrastructures and existing institutions: while new technologies encourage us to decentralize and distribute knowledge, many of our most important peacebuilding organizations remain highly centralized. How can a decentralized model of citizen action for local peace activism interface with a centralized model of citizen engagement in peace processes? Is it possible to take these alternative ways of doing things, and enable them to grow into complementary infrastructures, that supplement and inform incumbent ones?

We would argue yes, given the right level and type of engagement from the owners of incumbent processes and infrastructures within the field of peacebuilding. Organizations are beginning to value and incubate community-led development efforts in order to include community narratives into program development conversations, and to allow collective intelligence created at the grassroots level to inform decision making. However, these efforts are in their infancy and need to be built up substantially. Indeed, if thinkers such as Clay Shirky are right, it may very much be in the interest of incumbent institutions to begin this conversation, as the emergence of networked society points to a long-term decline of large institutions.

This does not suggest that large peacebuilding organizations will disappear, but that the future of peacebuilding might not consist of constructing large, monolithic bodies to run peace processes. Instead we may look to a future built on an open ecosystem of practices and ideas that supports a diverse range of initiatives and emphasizes transparency, collaboration and responsiveness among all stakeholders. This may seem like an uncertain, radical future for some, but is the natural corollary of giving millions of people access to new ways to gain information, communicate their views and build networks from this greater understanding of their ability to affect change. The peacebuilding sector should embrace these changes and seek to grow with them in tandem.

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About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.
The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a network that connects the critical mass of peacebuilding actors, resources, and expertise in Geneva and worldwide. Founded in 2008, the Platform has a mandate to facilitate interaction on peacebuilding between different institutions and sectors, and to advance new knowledge and understanding of peacebuilding issues and contexts. It also plays a creative role in building bridges between International Geneva, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in New York, and peacebuilding activities in the field. The Platform’s network comprises more than 3,000 peacebuilding professionals and over 60 institutions working on peacebuilding directly or indirectly.

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions: The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies; the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO).