Analysing the Intersections between Armed Conflict, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Development Efforts, Including the Role of Peacebuilding Initiatives

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyses the intersections between armed conflict, post-conflict reconstruction, and development efforts, including the role of peace-building initiatives. It explores the underlying reasons for armed conflicts, the vulnerabilities of particular population groups during wars, the broad effects on society, and the difficulties in rebuilding following hostilities. It also combines several theoretical models to complete a study and presents policy suggestions for development and lasting peace.

KEYWORDS: Conflict, Development, Peacebuilding, Intersection

INTRODUCTION

Global peace has not resulted from the conclusion of the Cold War. Contrarily, a slew of brutal new conflicts, including ethnic, religious, and civil, have occurred in the years that have followed. Despite being smaller in scope than World Wars I and II, the majority nonetheless caused significant harm to society, the economy, and the physical environment. There were around 225 armed conflicts between 1946 and 2001 (Gleditsch et al., 2002); the most serious ones, which occurred in 73 locations between 1989 and 1999, were estimated to have involved roughly 110 armed conflicts (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 2002). Entire nations have been engaged in conflicts that have destroyed some cities (like Grozny), years of intense urban combat (like Beirut) protracted sieges (like Sarajevo), and the fast displacement of entire populations (like Kosovo). Some have experienced genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the purposeful destruction of homes and land (Bosnia and Herzegovina); others have witnessed the use of starvation as a weapon of mass destruction (Mogadishu); yet others have been transported back in time to the early Middle Ages (Afghanistan) (Hasic, 2004). According to Strand and Hegre (2021), there were at least 56 serious conflicts documented in 2020, up from 55 in 2019; for the very first time since 2012, the number of fatalities reported in 2020 fell below 50,000; Afghanistan continues to the deadliest conflict, accounting for approximately 40% of all recorded casualties; eight wars were ongoing in 2020, up from seven in 2019 and six in 2018; and Islamic State (IS) was involved in 16 conflicts in 2020, accounting for 13% of all casualties. Given that many of the disputes that dominated 2020 were the same as those that existed thirty years prior, 2020 offered enough proof that conflict resolution is an ongoing endeavour. Many of these wars have their roots in the fall of the Soviet Union, but there are other ongoing conflicts throughout Africa. In 2020, the Islamic State (IS) was involved in sixteen wars, demonstrating its continued worldwide concern (Strand and Hegre, 2021).

Twenty million people in Ethiopia need immediate humanitarian assistance, including food, health care, and shelter (Amnesty International, 2024). Thirty-one cases have been brought before the International Criminal Court. Amnesty International (2024) estimates that by the end of 2021, approximately 89.2 million people had been forcibly displaced due to conflict, violence, persecution, and human rights violations. Additionally, seven million people had been internally displaced by the conflict in Ukraine, and 3.5 million by the conflict in Afghanistan. The urgent need for the international community's participation in reconstruction efforts comes next. However, this is just the start of an extraordinarily intricate process. Providing for humanitarian needs, physical repair and restoration, political reorganization, economic regeneration, addressing trauma and reconciliation, and laying the groundwork for sustainable growth are all part of post-war scenarios. There have been more conflicts in the world than ever before since the end of World War II. In particular, there have been more civil wars, many of which have proven very difficult to resolve. We have witnessed repeated conflicts in conflict zones such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Darfur, and Nigeria. Prior peace interventions frequently fail to address the real causes of conflict, and even when a peace agreement is reached, governments frequently fail to fulfil their obligations to their citizens. Thus, a broad interest in how human rights, development

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initiatives, peacebuilding initiatives, creating and reconstructing an accountable social contract, and formulating coexistence policies can all coexist in these circumstances informs this research review.

Causes of Armed Conflicts

Armed conflicts within states can be attributed to a variety of complex factors. In some cases, weak governments are ill-equipped to prevent or contain the emergence and spread of violence that more organized and legitimate governments would have been able to prevent or contain. In other cases, armed conflicts can be understood as the struggle for power by a segment of the elite that has been left out from exercising power in totalitarian systems of one-party tenet.

Social group disparities are typically acute in war-torn nations. Even though impoverished countries have a significantly higher likelihood of being involved in armed conflicts than affluent ones, it is this rather than poverty that appears to be the serious problem. Disparities in economic class, national identity, religion, or ethnicity are frequently reflected in the unequal access to political power, which also frequently blocks doors to nonviolent means of change. Armed conflicts are also associated with economic degeneration and maladministration, in part because the politics of a declining economy are more prone to conflict than those of an expanding economy. It has occasionally been observed that the effects of drastic structural adjustment and market-oriented economic changes imposed without corresponding social programs threaten political stability.

Factors that intensify conflict include religious and ethnic hostilities, widespread abuses of human and minority rights, and ethnic cleansing brought on by radicalized nationalism promoted by hate media. Another contributing cause is the relative ease with which armaments are traded globally, especially in nations and areas where civil conflicts are raging. Even while these weapons don't start conflicts, their widespread availability tends to feed them, threaten peace accords when fighters haven't given up all of their weapons, increase crime and violence in the community, and obstruct social and economic advancement. It is approximated that there are 500 million light guns in use worldwide. There are at least seven million tiny guns in West Africa, and since 1990, they have murdered almost two million people, the majority of whom were women and children (Tashkent, 2024). Mass population movements that have been induced, like in Central and West Africa, have also played a role in the expansion of hostilities.

Armed conflicts have become more intense in certain sub-Saharan nations as a result of greater political aspirations and disputes for control over valuable natural resources like gold and diamonds. For instance, the projected revenue from the sale of diamonds between 1992 and 1998 was $3.7 billion, which allowed the rebel organization UNITA to retain its military forces in Angola, where it controls a significant portion of the country's diamond output (Krishnan, 2021). For its part, the Angolan government is primarily using the money from oil concessions it has given to international corporations based outside to fund the war. Six states in the area are engaged in conflict with the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to a variety of intricate circumstances, including the desire to capture a portion of the nation's immense potential richness in resources, particularly gold and diamonds. The RUF's ownership of the diamond mines in Sierra Leone has given the rebel organization money and influence. According to Shaw (2003), there have been claims that rebels paid for weaponry by selling diamonds to Liberian troops who fought alongside their counterparts in the RUF/Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

Set of People at Risk in Armed Conflict

During wartime, certain civilian groups are more vulnerable to violence. These comprise women, the elderly, those with impairments, and kids. Amnesty International (2024) reports that in 2021, over 19,000 children were either enlisted as child soldiers, murdered or injured, sexually abused, or kidnapped during violent conflicts. Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Myanmar, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen were the countries with the highest number of UN-verified breaches. As Amnesty International (2024) reported in Northeast Nigeria, former child soldiers and others thought to be associated with armed groups are frequently wrongfully detained, tortured, and provided little to no assistance in accessing education or meeting their physical and mental health needs, as the organization also documented in Northern Iraq.

Fighting forces still intentionally trigger long-lasting physical and psychological harm to women and girls by sexually abusing them during numerous conflicts. According to Amnesty International (2024), there is evidence of rape, gang rape, sexual enslavement, sexual mutilation, and other types of torture inflicted on women and girls by Ethiopian forces and militia, Eritrean soldiers, and fighters from the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

Amnesty International (2024) has also discovered that the military-Boko Haram fight, which has lasted for over ten years, has had a particularly negative impact on senior people in Northeast Nigeria. The group also disclosed the number of elderly individuals who were starved to death, killed in their houses, or left to rot in filthy, illegal military custody.

Millions of Yemenis with disabilities found it difficult to receive even the most basic humanitarian supplies (Amnesty International, 2024). Many were abandoned as their family fled the battle, sometimes because it was too difficult for them to flee with wheelchairs, crutches, and other aids. Additionally, it was rather difficult to find psychosocial help, as it is in many crises.

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Society

Nowadays, domestic conflicts usually inflict more damage on civilians than interstate conflicts, partly because fighters have increasingly turned civilian targeting into a strategic goal. How humanitarian workers are treated—whether they are attacked or

refused access to victims in conflict zones—reflects this disdain for humanitarian standards and the Geneva Conventions on the rules of war. The human cost of armed conflict-related societies' collapse into economic, political, and social disintegration has been enormous. Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, it is believed that over four million people have died in violent conflicts.

In armed conflicts, women and children are disproportionately victims of horrific atrocities. One estimate puts the number of children murdered in armed conflicts during the previous ten years at as high as two million (Machel, 2023). Millions of people were mentally damaged by brutality, and three times as many individuals suffered severe injuries or were rendered permanently disabled—many of them due to landmines. Many others have been made to watch or even participate in terrible acts of violence. Another horrific legacy of these battles is the pervasive trauma and instability brought on by the crimes and suffering of the civilian populace. Large-scale emotional and psychological stress is brought on by conflicts and is linked to assault, bereavement, parental separation, and the devastation of the family and community. Many kids grow up with issues including sadness, decreased future orientation, increased aggressiveness, social isolation, nightmares, and flashbacks. Children, who may make up half of the population, find it difficult to fully benefit from schooling or to take part in post-conflict reconstruction because of these issues with mental health and psychosocial functioning that linger long after the combat has stopped. In their attempts to reconstruct society and avert a return to violence, governments frequently overlook the psychological effects of war as well as its underlying causes, such as the division and marginalization of certain groups (Wessells, 2016).

Another brutal weapon of mass destruction is sexual violence. As in the recent conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina, warring groups use sexual enslavement and rape of women as a means of terrorizing, intimidating, and dehumanizing one another. Rape has been used as an ethnic cleansing tool with the ultimate goal of destroying communities by dehumanizing and isolating women and young girls for having the "enemy's" kid. Many women in Bosnia and Herzegovina were coerced into giving birth to children they had conceived while being raped. Abortions were imposed on other ladies. There have also been instances of male victims of sexual assault.

The effects of conflict cause millions of children to suffer from malnutrition and illness. The high rate of illness, malnourishment, and mortality among young children is ascribed to military tactics that interfere with food supply distribution and production. In addition, children are raped and tortured for amusement, to punish parents, or to obtain information about classmates or parents. Intense psychological trauma results when girls are forced to exchange sexual favours for food, shelter, or physical safety for themselves or their children (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund UNICEF, 2023). Furthermore, there has been a rise in HIV/AIDS cases.

Millions of youngsters have lost their families due to war. 100,000 children lost their families in Rwanda in 1994 as a result of the conflict. According to UNICEF (2023), about 20% of children in Angola were taken from their homes and relatives in 1995. Children in Cambodia, where half the population is under 15 years, were left without adult caretakers as a result of the conflict. Delinquency, child prostitution, misuse of drugs, and other criminal activity are therefore widespread issues. It is also more common for displaced children to be used, mistreated, raped, tortured, and conscripted as child soldiers.

In certain situations, the establishment of conflict-free zones has proven successful in keeping children safe and delivering certain necessities. Periodic ceasefires that have been agreed to by governments and rebels have also made it possible for medical personnel to provide medical services and supplies and to immunize children against common illnesses including polio, measles, diphtheria, and tetanus. El Salvador, Sudan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Uganda, and Lebanon have all employed similar techniques. Alternative locations for war-damaged schools in Eritrea include caverns, concealed houses, or areas beneath trees. Mothers and teenagers in Sierra Leone received training to become teachers (UNICEF, 2023). Sri Lanka reached out to various community segments and out-of-school youth through public media. In several instances, job-oriented vocational training has facilitated the reintegration of former child soldiers back into society. UNICEF and UNHCR have started programs to find and reunite unaccompanied minors with their families to assist displaced youngsters. Villages have been established in Ethiopia as a result of Sudanese refugee camps, where three to five children live in huts under the supervision of a domestic caregiver.

Approximately one million people have been killed by landmines in various countries plagued by conflict, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Angola. Two to five million explosives are buried every year as well and an estimated 120 million landmines are planted in 71 nations (Kaseya, Dereje, Raji, Ngongo, Fallah and Ndembi, 2024). A few nations, such as Angola, Cambodia, and Afghanistan, each contain almost 10 million landmines. Landmines may have serious negative effects on health, ecosystems, and the economy. Because they are unable to understand warning signals and may confuse anti-personnel mines for toys (dolls), young children are particularly vulnerable to the dangers posed by these diversely shaped and sized explosives. Children are inclined to die from landmine damage due to their small bodies. In addition to people living in the nations that are affected, persons who are employed in the medical field and non-governmental organizations that aid populations affected by emergencies, displaced, or refugees in regional conflicts have also been injured by landmines. Even after conflicts have been resolved, scattered landmines continue to injure people, disrupt food production in agricultural lands and interfere with the movement of people and goods. In several nations, like Angola and Cambodia, landmines have not only claimed a high human cost but also destroyed large tracts of fertile land. Landmine-affected regions are more likely to have little access to safe drinking water,

which raises the risk of hunger and waterborne illnesses. A migration away from intensively mined rural regions may result in urban overpopulation and a rise in the risk of infectious disease transmission. Governments bear a heavy financial burden from landmine victims. While removing a mine might cost $300 to $1,000, treating a landmine survivor can cost anywhere from $3,000 to $5,000. The majority of developing nations with landmine contamination are unable to pay for mine clearance and victim rehabilitation. The lost productivity of mine victims has a negative impact on the economy as well.

Internally displaced people and refugees are the results of wars and acts of community violence spurred on by prejudice, intolerance, and hatred toward certain racial or religious groups. Beginning in the early 1990s, there was hope that the number of refugees and internally displaced people worldwide would diminish due to the thawing of numerous protracted armed conflicts. The sobering truth is that there were only around 50 million of them by the close of the 1990s, with 30 million of them being internally displaced (Krishnan, 2021). From 17 million in 1991 to 27 million in 1995, there were more refugees; however, by 1999, there were only 22.25 million. Large numbers of refugees and internally displaced people are typically found in about 18 countries that are experiencing armed war or internal unrest, while other causes including natural catastrophes and pervasive human rights violations have also contributed to this population. Well-known international organizations can provide care for refugees (such as UNHCR). Although internally displaced people are frequently compelled to flee their homes for the same reasons as refugees, no international agency has the same capacity to act on behalf of those who have been uprooted but did not cross a border. The circumstances surrounding internally displaced people differ throughout nations and are impacted by a wide range of social, political, and economic variables.

It has been observed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that managing internally displaced people is frequently more difficult than managing refugees who cross borders. The challenge of reaching out to large populations in remote and unstable areas is exacerbated by the difficulty of helping civilians within their nations, where the government or rebel forces in charge are often the source of their problems. Humanitarian organizations are unable to access hundreds of thousands of vulnerable individuals in conflict zones, the majority of whom are internally displaced, in places like southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Angola, and Sierra Leone. When such access is feasible, it frequently occurs under extremely hazardous circumstances. For instance, in the final quarter of 1999 alone, 30,000 more Burundian refugees fled to the United Republic of Tanzania. Approximately 300,000 Burundian refugees are now hosted in that nation (Ogata, 2000). Although 117.3 million individuals are thought to have been forcibly displaced globally as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, abuses of human rights, and situations that gravely disrupt public order (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, 2024).The UNHCR projects that, based on operational data, the number of people internally displaced has increased during the first four months of 2024 and is expected to surpass 120 million people by the end of April 2024. At the end of 2023, there were 117.3 million, up 8.8% or 8.8 million from the previous year's end of 2022. This growth is part of a 12-year trend of annual rises. Currently, one in every 69 individuals, or 1.5% of the global population, are relocated by force. Compared to a decade earlier, when 1 in 125 individuals were displaced, this is almost twice as many (UNHCR, 2024). Additionally, there are now more internally displaced persons than before. An estimated 300,000 individuals—virtually internally displaced persons as a result of government policy—are housed in "regroupment" locations. It has been challenging for humanitarian organizations to reach these individuals because, among other issues, the government has not offered any definite assurances on the safety of those providing aid in these locations.

Both domestically and globally, internal displacement is a danger to political and economic stability. Frequently devastated are the towns and villages where the refugees seek safety as well as the populations left behind. In many cases of armed conflict, the violence that originates in one nation frequently extends over entire areas, placing a heavy burden on neighbouring states from large refugee flows. There may be waves of desperate refugees that even distant countries must deal with. The trends in the number of individuals compelled to escape each year due to armed conflict and the number of fatalities connected to war are depicted in Figures 1 and 2 below (UNHCR, 2024).
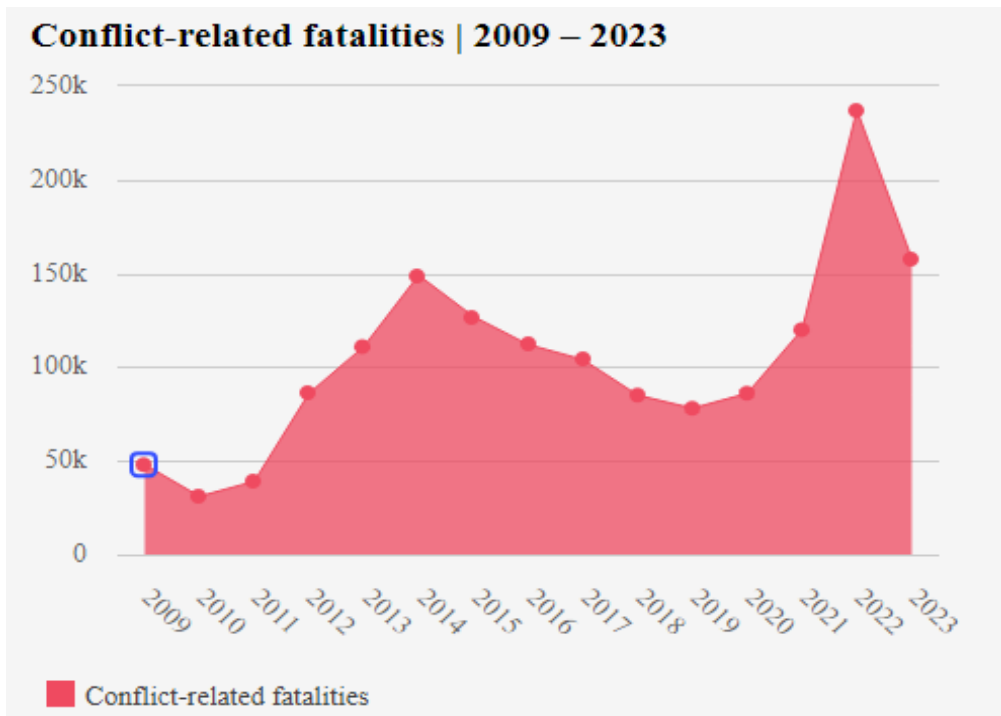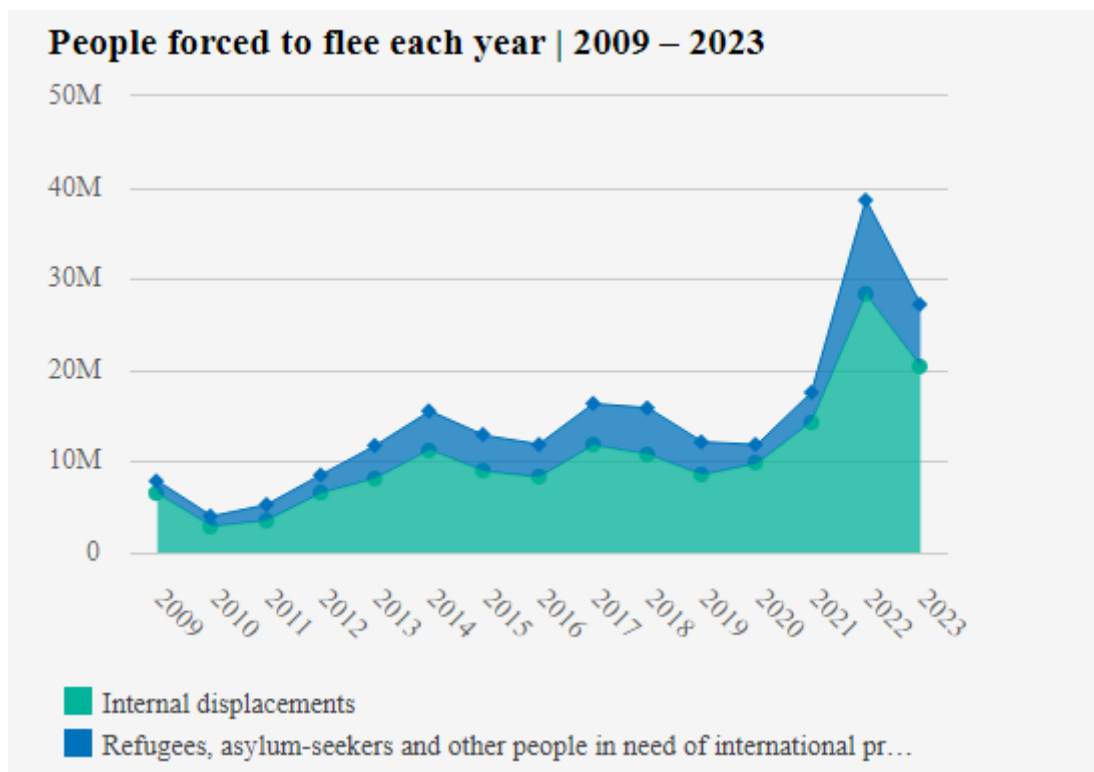
Figure 1: Conflict-related fatalities trends

Figure 2: Trend of people forced to flee due to armed conflicts

Internally displaced people are now recognized by UN development and humanitarian organizations as a separate group of people in need of assistance. A Secretary-General Representative has been keeping tabs on the worldwide situation of internally displaced people since 1992. The Office of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator officially came into existence in 1994 as the point of contact for requests pertaining to aid and safeguarding of internally displaced individuals. The Secretary-General reiterated in his 1997 reform programme that the Office is in charge of making sure that displaced people receive assistance going forward (Novicki, 2014). Given the dramatic rise in the population of internally displaced people and the issues they share with refugees, there appears to be a growing realization of the need for a holistic solution to the condition of both groups.

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Post-Conflict Reconstruction Planning Processes

  1. **Decision-making**

Rebuilding communities after a conflict requires the capacity to engage a wide range of community stakeholders, effectively manage initiatives, and comprehend the nuances of the political climate. In order to accomplish positive social and economic change, it is imperative that key stakeholders directly involved in the project be consulted to determine what they believe to be crucial components of project planning systems and procedures (Earnest, 2015). Post-conflict reconstruction efforts are often criticized for lacking sufficient planning, resources, finances, and an exit method. Instead of creating them specifically for the situation, global implementation organizations like the UN sometimes bring their own organizational policies and procedures for operations. To secure local ownership and the support of executed initiatives, it is crucial to engage the local community in the planning, implementation, and assessment stages. Due to the fact that post-conflict dynamics are always shifting, funders and implementing organizations need to be adaptable in their approach to project design and execution. Furthermore, civil society participants are seldom involved in decision-making procedures; instead, they are primarily involved in project execution. This is in contrast to the need for beneficiaries to be methodically involved at every step of the project in order to ensure steady development and growth (Earnest, 2015).

In post-conflict rebuilding procedures, inadequate planning and/or subpar construction are common problems with infrastructure projects. This may result from neglecting to consider the capacity, requirements, and circumstances specific to the area. Because of this, citizen engagement is essential throughout the project's early planning and design phases. This guarantees that the projects are pertinent and consider the demands of all segments of society (Earnest, 2015). Developing post-conflict rebuilding requires careful consideration of the circumstances, as noted by O'Driscoll (2018). Figure 3 illustrates how Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga (2018) emphasized the many dynamics and outcomes that must be considered when creating a program for post-conflict rebuilding.
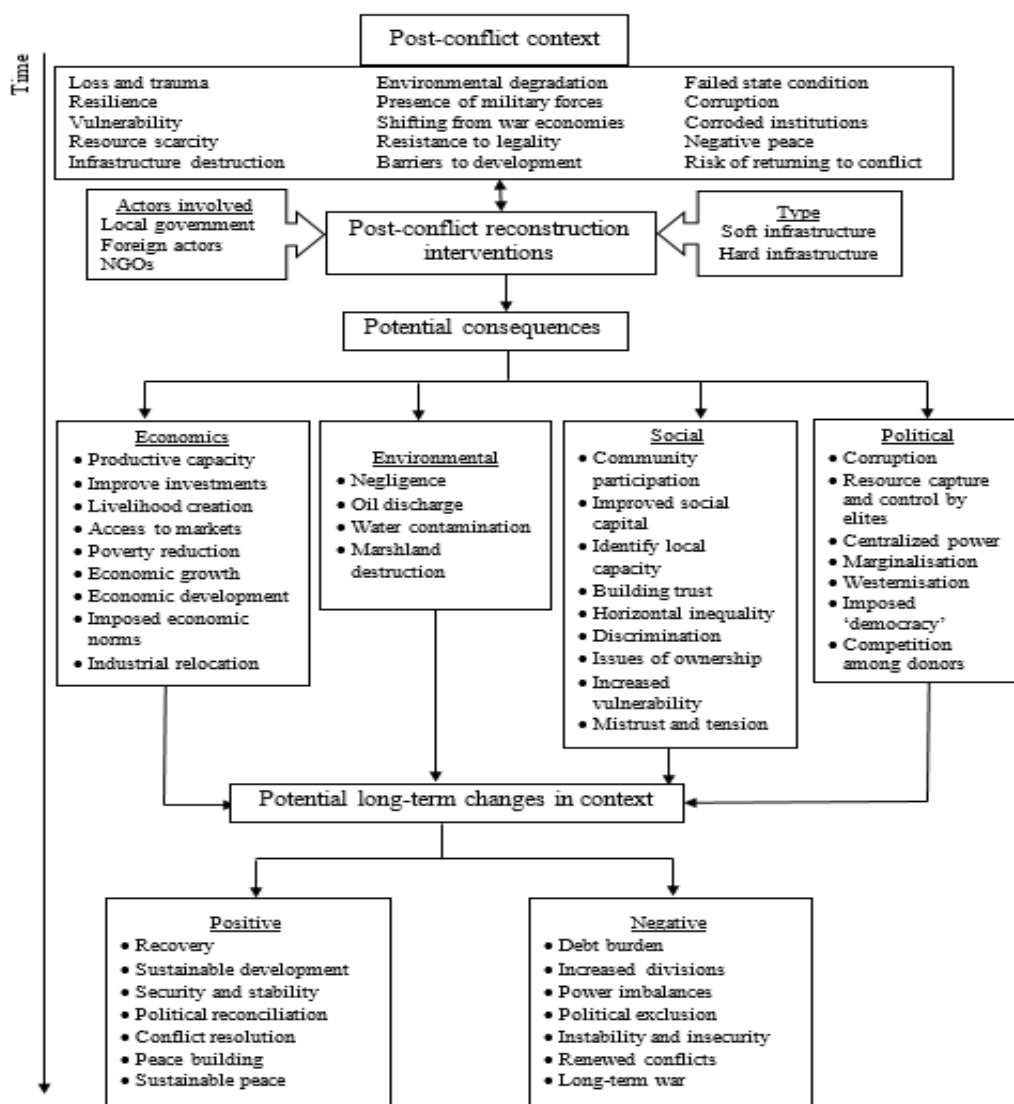

Figure 3: Post-conflict reconstruction process

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Involving the public in decision-making is essential to developing programs for reconstruction that are acceptable and successful. The individuals who are impacted are ultimately most suited to determine what is needed in a given scenario. Furthermore, a population's knowledge and comprehension of the many aspects of the rebuilding increase with the degree of direct participation in decision-making. In turn, this makes it possible for the populace to reap the full advantages of the reconstruction effort. Raising awareness can also aid in preventing the rebuilding from being disrupted by some segments of the populace who oppose it. But for this to be sustainable over time, the national government needs to back rebuilding that gives the people more control (Saul, 2014). Reconstruction decisions must consider not only the physical reconstruction, or the restoration of public services and political organizations, but also the necessary reconstruction of society, which goes beyond the more narrow definition of the term. Additionally, inclusive institutions and places that aid in resolving conflict concerns should be the main emphasis of reconstruction rather than replicating the problems that initially caused the conflict. Although this procedure must be tailored to the particular circumstances, the causes of the conflict must be taken into consideration when making judgments about the reconstruction procedure (O'Driscoll, 2018).

2. Timing

At different stages of the recovery process, multinational corporations and humanitarian organizations concentrate their efforts on post-conflict reconstruction. Aid increases in the first two years after the battle ends due to widespread media coverage and goodwill from throughout the world. But by the third or fourth year, this initial zeal and the help and support that accompany it start to fade (O'Driscoll, 2018). The host nation's capacity to take in and utilize the help to its fullest extent peaked around the middle of the first ten years following the end of the conflict, therefore the decrease in support is counterproductive. International enterprises, with the exception of construction firms, typically exhibit restricted engagement immediately upon the resolution of a conflict, opting instead to commence investments until the situation has stabilized (Bray, 2005).

Reconstruction following a conflict is also a long-term endeavour, and far too frequently, foreign players seek a quick fix and base their policies on the expectation of having an exit strategy in place soon. For example, the six-year rebuilding plan spearheaded by the international community in South Sudan was insufficient to bring about the essential transformation in the country, especially considering the neighbouring nations and their protracted state-building initiatives. The start of the South Sudanese civil war serves merely to highlight the shortcomings of the global community's temporary policies for the country's post-conflict rehabilitation (Francis, 2016).

3. Conditions

According to the reconstruction framework created by the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in 2002 (as cited in O'Driscoll, 2018), security—which encompasses all facets of public safety, both collective and individual—is a prerequisite for the successful completion of reconstruction. UN-Habitat (2017) contends, however, that support from the local community and government is necessary for post-conflict rehabilitation to succeed.

4. Funding

Locally driven projects are frequently abandoned because there is frequently insufficient money to satisfy the demands of post-conflict reconstruction. Thus, rather than taking into account the demands of the local community for development, programs frequently function in accordance with the interests of the funders. Thus, it is critical that donors back community-driven initiatives and make sure that funding aligns with community needs rather than donor objectives (Earnest, 2015).

5. Local ownership

As is frequently the case, local ownership should not be mistaken with national, regional, or even local government ownership; rather, it should relate to those who will be directly touched by the rebuilding. In actuality, popular participation in government should take precedence as it gives the populace a sense of power, which enhances legitimacy and counteracts the perception of foreign actors imposing their will. Additionally, this encourages the populace to participate more positively in restoration efforts (Saul, 2014).

In order to address the core causes of the violence, such as poverty and political marginalization, bottom-up and grassroots approaches to post-conflict reconstruction are essential. Consequently, creative bottom-up solutions that address social injustice and marginalization should be a part of restoration (Bender, 2011). However, there are obstacles that must be addressed in order to promote local engagement. The local elites behind the war have the ability to manipulate the process and use the reconstruction as a means of garnering support. Additionally, it shows the local populace that aggression is rewarded. This does support the earlier argument that it's critical to have a more regional definition of local. But neglecting the elites can also fuel conflict and prompt them to want to reclaim their position of authority (Saul, 2014).

6. Local needs

Reconstruction must take into account the requirements of the local population, especially those who have been more severely affected by the fighting. For instance, Sharp (2018) contends that rather than affordable housing, infrastructure, waste management, urban governance, and open space, Beirut and urban corporate growth received a lot of attention during Lebanon's rebuilding. Not investing in these places left a legacy that is being felt today, as is the heavy debt incurred from funding urban corporate expansions.

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Since some regions are built for some people and not for others, and since contracts are sometimes given to the same players that committed the violence during the war, building within reconstruction may be a violent process in and of itself. It can also be used to separate communities rather than bring them together. Furthermore, rather than re-establishing the social compact, elites may utilize reconstruction as a means of consolidating wealth and power (Sharp, 2018).

7. Economic development

Reconstruction and economic growth go hand in hand because sustained peace is made possible by this. Economic progress must, however, align with local perceptions and cultural norms. Growth must thus be maintained beyond the first infusion of funding and assistance for post-conflict reconstruction. Infrastructure initiatives should prioritize the restoration of livelihoods and the replacement of livelihoods reliant on the wartime economy, since they may be linked to programs aimed at reducing poverty (Sakalasuriya et al., 2018).

Programs for macroeconomic stabilization are a common topic for international players. Nonetheless, others contend that this limits the ability of the state to foster regional industry and business, and macroeconomic stabilization initiatives fall short of fostering the natural expansion of domestic enterprises. Furthermore, rather of helping the victims of the war, they typically serve multinational businesses. A microeconomic strategy would more effectively encourage the expansion of the private sector, reviving the economy, reducing reliance on foreign aid, broadening the economic base, and luring foreign direct investment into regional infrastructure and enterprises (Bender, 2011).

8. Environmental impact

Since war is inherently harmful to the environment, it is crucial that any negative effects of reconstruction be considered and minimized. In Iraq, for example, the reconstruction of the infrastructure resulted in a number of serious environmental problems, including oil spills, contaminated water, and the destruction of marshlands, which forced people to migrate and caused serious problems with the scarcity of drinkable water even today (Sakalasuriya et al., 2018).

Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Efforts

1. Accountability

Reconstruction after an armed conflict can be challenging as corruption is frequently pervasive in these nations. As such, in order to maintain openness, governments and aid organizations must set up anticorruption surveillance mechanisms; yet, it's also critical to create measures for accountability that are appropriate for the given environment (Earnest, 2015).

2. Coordination

Projects are frequently repeated or performed similarly as a result of poor coordination amongst the many funders and organizations participating in post-conflict rebuilding; this wastes money and prevents the project from meeting all of society's demands. Because of this, it is critical that all programs have effective coordination among the many players engaged; improper coordination can reverse the positive effects of the international presence (Earnest, 2015). The post-conflict environment differs greatly from the non-conflict environment, and consideration must be given to elements including vulnerability, crowding out, displacement, and the governance conundrum. Thus, in order to provide effective and context-specific solutions, intentional collaboration among the many stakeholders is essential (Sakalasuriya et al., 2018).

3. Legitimacy

Donors frequently employ post-conflict rebuilding to offer the state some semblance of legitimacy in the state-building endeavor. Nonetheless, Brown (2018) contends that enhancing the provision of services does not always translate into an improvement in the legitimacy of the government. The general public is more concerned with the manner and equity of these services' delivery. Furthermore, the local populace values service delivery that involves participation and if the service providers are perceived as being part of the community. This suggests a post-conflict reconstruction program that is more locally driven, as in local council-led (Brown, 2018).

4. Procurement

Reconstruction materials are frequently in short supply in post-conflict settings, necessitating their importation. This often results in a procurement procedure that involves tenders, in which overseas donors frequently decide to participate. Donors frequently put pressure on the implementing agency to purchase items from their nation even when doing so would take more travel or would be more expensive than importing commodities from nearby nations. This makes post-conflict reconstruction more expensive, sustainable, and appropriate; for this reason, it's critical that the procurement process be made more transparent. Reconstruction plans should include the fact that neighbouring nations frequently have more affordable and adequate material (Earnest, 2015).

5. Strengthening local capacity

One significant institutional barrier to the implementation of rebuilding projects may be a lack of local capability. Therefore, enhancing local institutions serves to maximize the long-term advantages of humanitarian aid in addition to being advantageous to the community. By increasing local institutional capacity through study abroad opportunities, training programs, and other means, donors can better utilize their resources while reducing potential hazards as well as expectations (Earnest, 2015).

6. Reconstruction when government is not supported

According to Heydemann (2018), the situation in Syria, where the regime is not backed by most donors, deviates from post-conflict reconstruction norms, which view the process as transforming the economy, society, and state while also creating a new, inclusive social contract. The pre-war political economy in Syria remained intact despite the conflict, and the wartime economic order was shaped by the enduring effects of the pre-war economic governance. Reconstruction is being used to re-impose authority rather than to transform society because the Assad regime has operationalized the post-conflict reconstruction of Syria's economy as a process of rebuilding authoritarianism. The government gradually rebuilds after seizing territory in order to restore its grip over all of the places it does not already rule. According to Heydemann (2018), this process will result in a more robust post-war political environment that will likely resemble the one it supervised prior to the uprising, albeit one that is more exclusive, constrictive, and made up of transactional alliances made up regarding newly wealthy allies and those who profit from the war.

The instance of Lebanon highlights the futility of the "Western donors'" tactic of interfering to try and change Lebanon's government, since Hezbollah was able to amass major influence in spite of these activities. According to Hamieh and Mac Ginty (2010), Lebabon's "political administration was established by negotiations, force and the show of force, and decidedly traditional politics" since the intervention's main objective—trying to bring Lebanon into compliance with donor expectations—was ultimately unsuccessful. On the other hand, Gulf and Arab governments focused their rehabilitation efforts on major infrastructure projects, which increased their favourability with regional political parties and consequently increased their political power. Nevertheless, it also served to strengthen the patronage-based political structure that the liberal peace players were attempting to overthrow (Hamieh and Mac Ginty, 2010).

7. Gender and equality

The available literature on post-conflict rebuilding best practices emphasizes how crucial it is to take gender issues into account. It is also crucial to address the specific needs of women in the post-conflict setting, such as concerns linked to sexual assault, internal relocation, and responsibility for the home. This entails making use of the transitional time to better women's situations, however others contend that doing so also helps to enhance the socioeconomic conditions of the populace as a whole. Women's participation in the decision-making process is crucial because of this (Saul, 2014).

Reconstruction following a conflict is a chance to prioritize gender equality and to recognize and appreciate the role that women have played in the process. To address gender differences in access to vital services and resources, attention must also be paid to women as a specialized category. In order to abolish gender inequity, Zuckerman and Greenberg (2004) identified certain areas that need special attention. These are:

i. **Women's entitlement to engage in politics:** In post-conflict nations, women have the chance to occupy roles in politics that were previously occupied by men. This can be accomplished by elections or quotas, but as women are more likely than males to face criticism, it is critical that support be provided to strengthen their ability to rule. Enhancing women's leadership potential will increase their chances of winning support from voters and help them succeed in office. Developing women's capacity to run for office, secure seats, and perform well in office should be part of this. It is critical to have female leaders and role models who really advance gender equality in the workplace.

ii. **Possession of the property:** In post-conflict rebuilding, drafting property rules that uphold people's rights to property and settling possession disputes are frequent undertakings. This offers an opportunity to guarantee that women have full and equal rights to own property, as failing to do so might negatively impact women's rights, particularly in areas where customs prohibit women from holding property. If post-conflict reconstruction initiatives are to assist women in gaining equitable access to fairness and legal expertise, they must also improve women's legal literacy.

iii. **Employment:** In addition to legal measures, action must be taken to guarantee that women are not subjected to discrimination in the workplace. There is a chance to guarantee that women are more adequately represented in society during the post-conflict era. It's also critical that, whenever males re-join the workforce, women are not forced from their jobs. Furthermore, employment opportunities under post-conflict rebuilding programs are frequently limited to demobilized males, which may further marginalize women. Furthermore, it is important to analyze government spending reductions, especially those related to healthcare, to make sure that women are not disproportionately harmed.

iv. **Absence of violence:** Many male demobilized soldiers who are used to using force are present in the post-conflict environment. It is crucial that women's rights are shielded against abuse in all its forms.

v. **Infrastructure:** Donors should take the effort to perform gender analyses in a variety of settings, since this might highlight unique infrastructure-related requirements. Women need to be involved in defining and creating infrastructure that meets their gendered demands, which vary depending on the situation and societal mores. Because they perform distinct labour jobs and have different ideas about what constitutes well-being, men and women prioritize rebuilding various kinds of infrastructure. Men frequently prioritize building major roads in order to go to cities for employment, but women typically choose rural roads in order to have access to critical amenities like marketplaces, water, educational institutions and healthcare facilities.

vi. **Demilitarisation, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR):** DDR is crucial in post-conflict environments, but it has a propensity to exclude women since it concentrates primarily on males and its benefits—such as jobs, training, allowances, etc.

After a conflict, it is crucial that the allocation of resources is not uneven since this might further marginalize the people who were affected and lead to fresh hostilities. When resources are misused and socioeconomic gaps develop during post-conflict reconstruction, people become more susceptible. This is known as horizontal inequality. This is the reason why centered on people projects are preferred over project-centered ones, and local engagement is essential (Sakalasuriya et al., 2018).

Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Development and Policy

The African Union (AU) has developed a policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) to help with the development of broad policies and procedures that expand measures aimed at consolidating peace, promoting sustainable development, and paving the way for growth and regeneration in nations and regions emerging from conflict. This plan is intended to serve as a flexible framework that can be adjusted to assist affected regions and countries in their endeavours to rebuild, maintain security, and experience growth while considering the particulars of every crisis situation. This approach is required since Africa is really moving toward solving its internal issues more quickly. The African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have made significant contributions to the successful execution of agreements on peace and the facilitation of discussions for a peaceful settlement of current crises. The number of ongoing wars on the continent has steadily decreased as a result of these efforts, while desire for peace, rebuilding, and development has increased (African Union, 2006).

Hence, the PSC's primary missions include peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, post-conflict reconstruction, and disaster management. Given this, the PSC Protocol outlines several post-conflict reconstruction tasks that necessitate implementation, such as re-establishing the rule of law, creating and growing democratic institutions, and planning, coordinating, and overseeing elections in the relevant Member States (Article 14(1)). Among other things, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC was created to solidify peace and stop the recurrence of conflict. This mandate has been extended to incorporate the stabilization of peace agreements reached, setting up frameworks for the social, economic, and political reconstruction of the nation's institutions and society, implementing programs for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, including those involving child soldiers, resettling and reintegrating refugees and internally displaced people, and providing support to vulnerable individuals, such as women, children, and the elderly, as well as other traumatized groups in society (Article 14 (3)). Additionally, the Protocol highlights the connection between conflict prevention and peace consolidation, directing the PSC to take all necessary steps to avoid a conflict from resuming for which a settlement has already been achieved (African Union, 2006).

The goal of the Policy, according to the African Union (2006), is to provide the groundwork for social fairness and long-term peace in post-conflict nations while also aligning with Africa's vision of development and rejuvenation. Thus, the policy is intended to be an instrument to:

i. Strengthen the truce and stop violent recurrence.
ii. Help tackle the core sources of conflict.
iii. Encourage and expedite strategy and execution of reconstruction efforts.
iv. Strengthen cooperation and mutually beneficial relationships amongst various parties involved in PCRD procedures.

Donors and Post-Conflict Governments

An effective post-conflict rehabilitation process requires a range of sectoral interventions that are well coordinated and mutually supportive (Ernstorfer, Mekolo, Resta and Rosenblum-Kumar, 2007). Additionally, they argue that it is imperative to ensure that efforts to reconstruct society and the legitimacy of the state be integrated with the physical rebuilding. Furthermore, O'Driscoll (2018) offered some recommendations, lessons learned, and best practices, with an emphasis on the communication between donors and the post-conflict administration:

i. The leadership of the nation that emerges from the struggle must be dedicated to establishing transparent, reliable, effective, and efficient government institutions that will provide services to the populace.
ii. Post-conflict management that is successful needs to be dedicated to resolving societal discussion and reconciliation, as well as tackling inequality and exclusion.
iii. The reconstruction procedure ought to be used to foster the real and active engagement of people and civil society organizations in the operations of the local government in order to foster a participatory relationship with them.
iv. Since the public sector is a major force for change in rebuilding, it must overhaul its processes in order to win back the confidence of the public.
v. The advancement of macroeconomic stabilization and rebuilding must be carefully coordinated with elements of peacebuilding, such inclusion and reconciliation.
vi. In order to improve public institutions' efficacy and provide checks and balances in government, civil service capacity development initiatives should be concentrated on creating capacity at all levels as part of post-conflict rebuilding. This will increase accountability and trust.

Analysing the Intersections between Armed Conflict, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Development Efforts, Including the Role of Peacebuilding Initiatives

    vii.   Donors should recognize that capacity building and rebuilding is a long-term project, and local and national government support is required for it to succeed.

Pillars of Post-Conflict Reconstruction

The post-conflict reconstruction task framework developed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies CSIS (2017) aims to outline the different tasks and priorities that are frequently found in a post-conflict setting. It is intended to support national governments, foreign funders, and regional civil society groups in the planning, structuring, and execution of reconstruction policies and initiatives. The Framework outlines tasks and priorities between the end of violent conflict and the return to normalcy, even when rebuilding operations occur at different points during and after a war. Four pillars support the structure of CSIS (2017): security, social and economic well-being, justice and reconciliation, and governance and participation.

1. **Security:** This deals with several facets of public safety, including the creation of secure surroundings and reliable security systems. Security, both personal and communal, is necessary to achieve results in other pillars. The preservation of territorial integrity and protecting civilian lives from sudden, widespread conflict are its most urgent considerations.

2. **Justice and reconciliation:** In particular, this emphasizes the need for fair laws, compassionate prison systems, open courts, efficient law enforcement, and official and informal channels for settling complaints resulting from conflict. All of these are necessary to cope with historical abuses of the legal system. These duties offer a way to settle disputes, impose just punishment for past actions, and strengthen the ability to enact and uphold the law. They involve both remarkable and conventional attempts to make amends between ex-combatants, victims, and offenders, while including the idea of restorative justice.

3. **Social and economic well-being:** This takes care of basic social and economic requirements, including emergency assistance, the restoration of basic services, the establishment of a sustainable economy, and the start of an inclusive development program. Protecting the populace from hunger, illness, and the environment is necessary for their well-being. It frequently follows the implementation of security. Humanitarian aid is replaced with long-term social and economic development when the situation steadies.

4. **Governance and participation:** In particular, establishing a representative constitutional structure, bolstering public sector management and administration, and guaranteeing active and transparent civil society participation in the creation of government and its policies are all addressed here. This speaks to the necessity of legitimate, effective political and administrative institutions as well as participatory processes. Establishing guidelines and processes for political decision-making as well as providing effective and transparent public services are aspects of governance. The process of providing the populace a voice through the growth of civil society, which includes idea formation and sharing through advocacy organizations, civic associations, and the media, is referred to as participation.

Phases of Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Post-conflict rebuilding is split into three conceptual phases according to the CSIS (2017) framework:

1. **Initial intervention:** Following the cessation of hostilities, this stage is marked by providing emergency humanitarian aid, stability, and military involvement to maintain a minimum level of security. The deployment of foreign peacekeepers is one possible reaction.

2. **Transformation:** Building acceptable, resilient local capacities is the main goal of the transformation stage. Special emphasis is placed on growing the local economy, setting up systems for participation and governance, and laying the groundwork for providing fundamental social welfare services like medical care and educational opportunities.

3. **Promoting sustainability:** Often called the "final phase," this stage calls for the consolidation of long-term rehabilitation initiatives, which frequently results in the end of foreign military engagement. Additionally, this stage establishes a vital basis for preventing conflict and the resurgence of violence.

The Role of Peacebuilding Initiatives

Implementing various reform and rebuilding initiatives in nations with some of the most unstable, unstable, and unpredictable political conditions is known as peacebuilding. These circumstances necessitate making trade-offs between conflicting demands and objectives since they frequently involve tensions and contradictions that cannot be entirely resolved. Furthermore, every post-conflict circumstance is distinct, refusing broad ideas and action plans. Experience does, however, point out areas that require change to provide decision-makers the instruments, materials, and political backing they need to handle these challenging circumstances. The political dynamics of post-conflict environments have not received enough attention in previous peacebuilding initiatives. International entities have not shown enough interest in helping nations rebuild their capacity for service delivery and governance. By taking proactive measures to tackle these issues, policymakers and practitioners will be better equipped to oversee peacebuilding within each distinct setting. The entire mandate of the UN's new peacebuilding structure has not yet been completed. Cogent peacebuilding initiatives have proven difficult to develop and implement due to the diverse interests, objectives, and points of view of actors (International Peace Institute IPI, 2009).

Analysing the Intersections between Armed Conflict, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Development Efforts, Including the Role of Peacebuilding Initiatives

Policy and Institutional Shortcomings in Multilateral Capacity for Peacebuilding

IPI (2009) lists the following institutional and policy shortfalls in the multilateral capacity for peacebuilding:

1. Insufficient global willingness, focus, and resources, particularly in the short- and medium-term. This issue is related to the propensity of recent developments or organizations (such as civilian rosters or the Peacebuilding Fund [PBF]) to expand current obligations or assets instead of just rerouting them.
2. The absence of civilian capacities that are suited for deployment and that can interact with military personnel.
3. More thought has to be given by the international community to the precise ways in which civilians from other countries might best assist peacebuilding efforts, particularly about institution-building (because it might not include hundreds of civilian judges). However, more foreign citizens with specialized knowledge, the ability to work in unfamiliar environments, comprehension of and adaptability to local customs, and the capacity to support the growth of local skills are needed for peacebuilding operations. The figures vary by nation and industry, therefore it's best to approximate those requirements.
4. The inadequacies in post-conflict societies' contextual knowledge, their application, and their ability to continuously re-evaluate the setting throughout international operations.
5. Inadequate systems for encouraging local people to take part in global initiatives.
6. The field in question is characterized by a multitude of terms and concepts that are used interchangeably but have different meanings. This has been most evident recently in discussions surrounding the Gordon Brown initiative on early recovery and peacebuilding, but it is also present in the approaches taken by various nations and agencies. This conceptual confusion is significant because the tools used to address post-conflict societies differ from but overlap with the tools used to address weak states, humanitarian crises, and development challenges in general. These challenges exacerbate ongoing issues with determining the effectiveness of peacebuilding, state-building, and economic recovery.

Strategy Needed to Achieve Renovations in Peacebuilding

The IPI (2009) listed many strategies that are required to accomplish improvements in peacebuilding. They include:

1. Collaborate with the executive directors of international financial institutions (IFIs) and the finance ministers of donor nations to develop a common comprehension of the significance and nature of peacebuilding as well as other multinational and peace-related issues.
2. Draw attention to the differences in global resources allocated to military and civilian organizations for tackling intricate security issues such as peacekeeping.
3. A stronger emphasis on the "3D" (diplomacy, development, and defense) framework within donor nations to better coordinate efforts to support fragile and post-conflict governments, particularly in organizing, funding, and developing field operations.
4. Look at ways to strengthen civilian capacity, such as standby plans and rosters, with a focus on South-South transactions, particularly for specialists with senior issue-specific expertise and applicable country-specific knowledge. (1) To achieve this kind of progress, resources and demands must be matched precisely. This includes carefully defining which civilians— whether domestic or foreign—are required for each area and how they will contribute to the development of national skills. (2) Rather than assigning duties that may potentially replace national skills, international citizens should be hired, given responsibilities, and held accountable for improving national capacities. (3) While there is less risk associated with duplicate civilian capabilities than with inadequate capacity, the UN system, regional agencies, and donor nations should collaborate closely—possibly exchanging rosters—to minimize redundant procedures for locating and assigning civilians.
5. Encourage dialogue on how to make the national system more cohesive and integrated. As the UK early recovery project has shown, part of this involves moving toward stronger assistance for senior nation leaders in the field and for leaders of post-conflict nations, as well as for them in integrating, mobilizing, and deploying resources.
6. Take into consideration actions to strengthen the country system's cohesiveness and capability, such as the appointment of a High Commissioner for Peacebuilding and/or Recovery, a concept being researched by the Center for International Cooperation (CIC) at New York University.
7. Call on member states to review the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) operations and realign them with more modest, strategic goals such as: fostering international engagement with countries on the PBC schedules; recognizing and disseminating peacebuilding fundamentals instead of operational specifications, identical or efficient procedures, or instruction acquired; and delivering thoughtful support for the countries on the PBC agenda.
8. Press member states to consider the PBC's role in resource mobilization as extending well beyond the PBF and to look for ways to expedite the PBF's payment of such monies.
9. Demand that the Secretariat and PBC communicate with member states and civil society more transparently on the PBF's procedures, limited capacity, and particular goals.

10. Bolster the Peacebuilding Support Office's (PBSO) two distinct roles: (1) The PBSO should help the PBC by offering more sensible advice and direction that strategically and selectively supports Permanent Representatives and their staffs. (2) The PBSO's function within the Secretariat should aim to be more helpful to the Secretariat and its departments, as well as to nations engaged in political missions and peacekeeping efforts at all phases. (3) Being the inaugural office, the PBSO should keep devoting time and energy to forging solid connections with other Secretariat funds, organizations, and programs to guarantee that it can utilize all of the country's system's resources to support the PBC's operations.

Ideas Action for Peacebuilding

1. Boost field-level leadership: This calls for concentrating on diverse leadership teams, giving field-level leaders the ability to make decisions, and improving the training and assistance provided to the country's top leaders. Increasing the power of leaders to: help national and international actors agree on the priorities for global support; concurring on the duties and obligations for providing reality; as well as maintaining field-level participants responsible for fulfilling agreed responsibilities are three ways to delegate decision-making.

2. Increase the amount of flexible money available and look for more strategic and coordinated external assistance: International organizations and donors should set up practical systems for strategic coordination that will help to rally political support for peacebuilding in the field, in capitals, and nations. Additionally, member nations must improve the post-conflict financial system's predictability, flexibility, and openness.

3. Make the development of national institutions a top priority: Create mechanisms for (1) recognizing and strengthening local capacities already in place; and (2) locating, matching, assigning, and overseeing civilian capacity from abroad to carry out essential tasks when needed quickly, while also improving local capacities over the medium to long term.

4. Strengthen Nation connectivity in post-conflict scenarios: Develop a comparatively modest pool of cross-system strategy personnel to bolster cross-system capability for integrated planning, and unify rules and processes to support integrated action.

5. Modify the Peacebuilding Commission even more: Pay more attention to tracking development in the field and making national and international players responsible for fulfilling their pledges.

CONCLUSION

In the end, ending the conflicts that drive people from their homes is necessary to find a solution to the issues relating to refugees and internally displaced people. Through a range of programs, including enhanced warning systems designed to assist in locating and eliminating conflict origins, the international community has attempted to avoid, control, and resolve disputes.

Actions to meet the needs of juvenile fighters and victims are starting to be included in national and international initiatives. In peace talks, it is becoming more common for aid and recognition to be contingent on the non-use of children as combatants. Such agreements have been reached, for instance, between Sudan and Sri Lanka. One of the major focuses in peacebuilding is demobilizing child soldiers and assisting with their reintegration into society through adoption, counselling, and welfare programs. Rehabilitating kid victims and warriors is a difficult endeavour. If children involved in violent conflict are to participate in peace negotiations, they must get immediate assistance since they are undernourished, ignorant, skillless, and mentally damaged. It is up to these youngsters, who have never known anything except battle, to bring about and preserve peace in these war-torn nations for future generations.

For durable solutions to armed conflicts, recognizing human basic rights is vital, with specific attention to the human rights of cultural, genetic, and linguistic minorities. Equally, strong governance and the building of civic societies are vital for tackling the underlying roots of conflict: historic enmity, economic despair, social injustice, and political tyranny. The international community is also taking steps to support nations that have gone through violent conflicts and are currently facing the daunting challenge of reconstructing their severely damaged communities more successfully.

In a society ravaged by armed conflict, consensus on the lofty goal of laying the groundwork for peace is not difficult to achieve. It is far more difficult to agree on what this implies and how to get there. Post-conflict circumstances are incredibly complicated and need for juggling conflicting objectives and interests. It is typically required to respond to the many conflicting demands provided by each unique setting by utilizing institutional processes in novel and adaptable ways.

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