

# Peacebuilding Highlights

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Preventing Conflict, Building Peace



Facility in specified countries and territories. In 2024, consultations will be undertaken to update the Fund's Terms of Reference according to the resolution's provisions.

Preparations are also underway to launch the Human Rights and Peacebuilding Thematic Review in the second quarter of 2024, in partnership with Switzerland and OHCHR. The review focuses on diverse programming areas within the human rights-peacebuilding nexus supported by the PBF, for example, combatting hate speech, as well as protection of human rights defenders, civic space, transitional justice, access to justice, and National Human Rights Institutions.

Our Office continues to support the PBC's innovative initiatives to facilitate multi-country engagement and exchanges of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in the spirit of South-South and triangular cooperation – underlining the universality of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We are supporting the Commission's efforts to forge closer ties with regional and subregional organizations, which culminated, in late 2023, with a visit to the African Union Commission and the institutionalization of regular meetings between the PBC and AU Peace and Security Council.

PBSO is closely supporting the leadership of the new Chair of the PBC, Brazil, in line with the Chair's priorities and the programme of work for 2024. We are also supporting the Commission as it agrees on the framework of the 2025 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture.

Our commitment to strengthening UN system coherence in support of peacebuilding persists, with PBSO playing a pivotal role in leading cross-pillar initiatives. These initiatives encompass the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda in collaboration with UNFPA and the UN Youth Office; launching the Peacebuilding Impact Hub; and organizing the inaugural Civil Society Organizations-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding in late November-December 2023, mentioned above. We also continue to explore the role of the private sector in building and sustaining peace with partners such as Germany and to strengthen UN partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in crisis-affected contexts. My recently published joint blog with the World Bank (WB) Director of the Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Group, Soukeyna Kane, outlines the collaborative efforts between the UN and WB to address global challenges to fragility, conflict, and violence, crucial for achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction.

DPPA plays a key role in supporting durable solutions to internal displacement at both political and operational levels. This is particularly significant

considering that nearly 90 per cent of internally displaced persons (IDPs) reside in countries or regions hosting either a Special Political Mission or a Peacekeeping Operation. DPPA has developed an institutional plan for the period 2023-2026, aiming to contribute to displacement solutions from both preventive and peacebuilding perspectives. The plan encompasses four key areas: political analysis and conflict prevention, support for Special Political Missions and Resident Coordinators, assistance to intergovernmental processes, and advocacy for financial backing. DPPA will continue to advocate for effective cross-pillar coordination to deliver tangible results in displacement settings at the country level.

Our efforts continue with UN and other partners to invest in evidence-driven peacebuilding impact. The Peacebuilding Impact Hub, referenced above, has been moving apace since its launch in December 2023. In 2024, a key deliverable of the Impact Hub will be a Global Overview Report on the current state of peacebuilding and what we can learn from it.

In the overall drive for an inclusive peace, DPPA/PBSO is committed to ensuring young people's meaningful participation in formal and informal political and peace processes at global, regional, and national levels. DPPA has endorsed its first Youth, Peace and Security Strategy (2023-2026) in line with Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) and subsequent resolutions. Serving as a global co-lead alongside UNFPA on the YPS agenda, and closely collaborating with the UN Youth Office, we work to ensure that the

roles played by PBSO in collaboration with the UN Youth Office





Recognizing the key role of youth as agents of change, the initiative supported the formulation of the first ever Kaduna State Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), emanating from the Nigeria National Action Plan and outlining strategies for engaging young people in conflict prevention, resolution, and sustainable peacebuilding. The development phase of the Action Plan involved consultations with youth through interviews and focus group discussions, engaging platforms such as the National Youth Council of Nigeria, National Association of Nigerian Students, and the Kaduna State Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security. A diverse group of 41 youths, including 13 women, participated in the EWER training and 50 youths, with 17 women, contributed to

the development of the YPS Action Plan, underscoring the crucial roles of both young women and men in maintaining peace and security.

Moving forward, the project will continue to enhance the KSPC's capabilities, including the establishment of a centralized EWER system for Kaduna State, bringing together the existing frameworks and extending coverage to all 23 Local Government Areas. The KSPC staff will be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fulfill their roles as early warning responders, peacebuilders and mediators. These measures aim to strengthen KSPC's role as the primary peacebuilding institution in Kaduna State, ensuring its effectiveness in maintaining stability and fostering harmony throughout the region.



The war that broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan in April 2023 has escalated instability, led to widespread displacement, sparked intercommunal violence, and resulted in over 14,600 reported deaths<sup>1</sup>. The war has also disrupted progress in women's empowerment as leaders. The fragile democratic transition that started in 2019 highlighted the importance of incorporating women's leadership and perspectives in political processes. Notably, previous peace negotiations often excluded women, particularly those from peripheral states whose diverse experiences and concerns often went unaddressed, despite being disproportionately affected by conflicts.


Numerous stakeholders in Sudan are working hard to change the traditional gender norms that have limited women's leadership and their opportunities to collaborate with male peers in decision-making forums. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), Search for Common Ground worked to empower an intergenerational and diverse group

of women from the conflict-ridden states of Sudan to assume leadership roles in peace, security, and political endeavors. The initiative, titled 'Strengthening the Political and Peacebuilding Role of Women in Sudan's Transition' with a budget of nearly \$900,000, has engaged over 6,400 participants across South Kordofan, West Kordofan and Gedaref states. The two-year project, implemented from February 2021 to 2023, encompassed leadership training on the women, peace, and security (WPS) and youth, peace, and security (YPS) agendas, and built capacities in managing difficult discussions.

The project facilitated connections between emerging young women leaders and established women mentors through peer-to-peer sessions, enhancing their confidence to apply their newly acquired skills and engage with their communities on peace and security issues. It supported young women in collaborating with experienced women and young men to design community initiatives for peace that addressed their communities' specific

<https://acleddata.com/2024/02/16/sudan-situation-update-february-2024-sudan-the-saf-breaks-the-siege/>





The 2023 Presidential and Legislative Elections in Liberia marked a historic milestone as the first general elections conducted under the sole responsibility of national authorities since the UN Mission in Liberia concluded its operations in 2018. Lauded by election observation missions for their overall peaceful nature with low numbers of incidences of violence, these elections represented a significant achievement for the people of Liberia.

Two peacebuilding initiatives played a key role in enabling peaceful electoral processes and, ultimately, a peaceful transition of power.





The 2023 elections in Grand Cape Mount and Grand Gedeh Counties were particularly noteworthy, with a significant increase in women's representation, a direct outcome of these concerted efforts. For the first time, Grand Cape Mount elected three women, significantly enhancing female representation in the legislature – the county went from having no representation of women in the Legislature to one with the highest number of women. Similarly, Grand Gedeh elected its first female representative.

Another participant, Miatta Siryon, Chair of a country-wide women's association in Grand Cape Mount said, "We learnt that it is important for women to take part in politics. We were taught how to resolve conflicts during elections. We raised awareness on violence against women during elections. We must not allow party differences to tear us [women] apart." She believes this contributed to the historic victory for women candidates in Grand Cape Mount County.

In the Western Balkans, a regional peacebuilding initiative is empowering young people to engage meaningfully with municipal councils, ensuring their perspectives and needs are heard and considered in local decision-making processes. A total of 57 municipal councils across Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Kosovo<sup>1</sup> have seen an improvement in youth participation with the project's support. The creation and strengthening of local youth councils (LYC), which operate independently at the municipal level to represent the diverse interests of young people to their respective local mayors and councils, marks a significant step toward more inclusive and responsive

This regional project titled 'Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality & Trust,' implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, and UNESCO, and funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is helping to increase trust among youth towards their governance and administrative structures in the Western Balkans.

In Albania, the Ministry of Youth monitors the activities of the LYCs and reports that 70 percent of LYCs are meeting on a monthly basis with municipality officials, including mayors or deputy mayors to discuss youth-related issues at the local level and convey youth concerns. Ministry of Youth monitoring also shows that most LYCs are able to ensure funds or in-kind contributions from municipalities and local CSOs to organize activities for and with youth in their respective municipalities. In North Macedonia, youth are now preparing up to 10 official requests to municipal councils for youth projects, including on combating hate speech.

"Participation in the local youth council is an outstanding experience which provides not only the opportunity for personal development, but also contributes to decision making and the well-functioning of local level institutions. Me and my peers have noticed that the municipality is our partner, and encourages us to be active actors in decision-making processes," said Romina Shahini, representative of the Local Youth Council in Gramsh in Albania.

Albania has taken the lead in the region with this initiative, with virtually all municipalities boasting active and effective local youth councils. This achievement builds on previous UN efforts that supported the Ministry of Youth in crafting the national youth strategy and legislation. In Albania, UNDP and UNFPA are now developing the capacities of LYCs and helping local authorities with the implementation of the youth strategy.

Erion Ibrahim, representative of the LYC in Lezhë, Albania, said "As a member of the local youth council in Lezhë, I have contributed to transforming the council into a mechanism that brings together youth, civil society and institutions. I am happy to say that we have represented youth voices and conveyed youth concerns in the municipality."

As part of supporting LYCs, the project emphasizes connecting young individuals across diverse backgrounds to bridge divides within communities. In North Macedonia, where less than a quarter of the 81 municipalities have established LYCs, UNDP and UNFPA are supporting five municipalities to improve youth engagement practices. The agencies strengthened the capacities of two existing LYCs and helped to create two new ones through coaching. The LYCs have between five and ten members per municipality, aiming for equitable gender representation within these bodies.

Leutrim Bilali from Gostivar municipality remarked, "The local youth council in Gostivar was in its first phase of organizing and the project activities helped to mobilize young people and to achieve the goals of building constructive narratives, expanding youth participation, and informing youth about the opportunities that the youth centers and youth NGOs provide, which they did not know about before."

To ensure sustainability of this process, the goal is to secure greater focus and resources for youth issues at both central and local levels, institutionalizing consultations between LYCs and respective institutions, integrating youth matters in development plans, and backing youth initiatives with funds or other means. In

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More inclusive, gender-equal and peaceful societies are possible, when women participate in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. The contribution to the PBF by Canada supports the meaningful participation of women in conflict-prevention efforts and works to advance the global Women, Peace and Security agenda. Canada is leading the conversation in the areas of localization and impact measurement and is a founding partner of PBSO's Impact Hub. Canada also funded the newly launched impact evaluation of PBF's programme in East Darfur, Sudan.

Ambassador Bob Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN said, "With conflict and

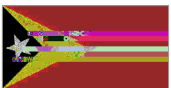
needed now more than ever. Together, we must support and invest more in conflict prevention, which is the only way to avoid conflicts from escalating, becoming protracted and leading to the staggering

catalytic and flexible financing to support local and national peacebuilding efforts, including those led

our efforts to prevent and respond to conflict and violence. But we also know that more is needed to address the demand for peacebuilding support in countries that are affected by conflict. It's critical for

This builds on our significant investments in the UN's peacebuilding work over many, many years and

transition from conflict to lasting peace. I want to thank the UN including the Peacebuilding Support Office for its tireless efforts to promote sustainable peace amidst such a difficult moment and to reaffirm



A founding member of the Group of Seven Plus (G7+), an intergovernmental organization of countries that promotes peace and stability through advocacy on aid effectiveness and facilitates peer learning on good development practices, Timor-Leste has been contributing to peacebuilding and sustaining peace at international, regional and national levels. Since 2022, Timor-Leste has been engaged with the Peacebuilding Commission to mobilize support for its peacebuilding priorities, discuss challenges and share good practices

The Peacebuilding Commission's first-ever ambassadorial-level meeting on Timor-Leste took place in September 2022, with the participation of H.E. Mr. José Ramos Horta, President of Timor-Leste, and H.E. Mr. Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the country. Timor-Leste further contributed to the discussion at the



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H.E. Babo Soares said, "Efforts for conflict prevention and peacebuilding rest on the responsi li

