

Civilian Protection and Conflict Resolution: Good Practices at the Local Level

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

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onflict situations across the world disrupt civilian lives through violence, economic hardship, and political turbulence. Non-profit and government organizations operating at local levels aim to minimize these disruptions to civilian life.

This report was prepared for the Henry L. Stimson Center by a team of graduate students at the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs as part of a Capstone project. Our analysis includes case studies of five national conflicts and identifies good practices in local conflict resolution, which contribute to the protection of innocent civilian populations in conflict situations. We categorized these five cases by conflict type (communal/mass, elite, factional, foreign intervention, and revolutionary) and explored the work of local non-governmental organizations to discover several common themes among the cases.

Findings and themes developed through the case study analysis seek to pinpoint which types of conflict call for what conflict resolution approaches. We found some conflict resolution approaches are applicable for multiple conflict types, but the majority of conflict contexts are highly complex and do not involve clear-cut courses of action. Nevertheless, common observations throughout the case studies point to good practices in conflict resolution, which are important to transfer to potential conflict situations. According to our analysis, effective local-level practices include: fostering active and inclusive civic participation, including by women and youth, encouraging local integration of potential or former fighters, and sufficient funding for long-term local initiatives. By adopting these types of good practices, local and international practitioners will be better able to protect civilians in conflict-affected areas.

INTRODUCTION:

The diversity of conflicts and their causes is an almost unlimited field, and the prevention and resolution of conflict is just as broad. In order to examine what similarities exist in successful conflict resolution and prevention approaches, we have taken five case studies of diverse conflicts and post conflict situations in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Guatemala, Lebanon and South Sudan. We also identified several themes pertaining to conflict resolution or prevention in our five case studies; the protection of women and children, promotion of accountability at a local level, efforts to halt the recruitment of new combatants, reducing corruption, and encouraging interfaith dialogue. In this paper we will highlight what has proven to be successful in one type of conflict and how it could be applied to other cases.

METHODOLOGY:

Under the broader framework of civilian protection, the scope of this project involved a comparison and analysis of local-level conflict resolution approaches within conflict-affected countries. In an effort to consider multiple types of conflict, our team chose to investigate a sample of conflict-affected countries that covered a variety of contexts and a variety of local conflict resolution approaches. While the sample of selected case studies is small and not representative of all global conflict, the cases illustrate a useful selection of different conflict types as well as different intervention approaches. Developing these case studies then informed observations related to good practices that could be transferable to other conflict situations.

In conducting our work, we began with a review of a broad range of academic literature on the subjects of conflict and conflict resolution in several regions of the world. (See Appendix A for full literature review.) This broad review and further conversations with the Stimson Center helped us develop typologies of both conflict and local conflict resolution efforts. These typologies then guided our decision to focus on five countries in conflict or post-conflict status, with a sampling of conflict resolution efforts in those places. We then conducted extensive searches for specific organizations in those five countries engaged directly in conflict resolution—both purely local organizations and international NGOs, such as Search for Common Ground and Non-Violent Peace Force, that have a presence in one of the five countries. We reached out to several organizations in each country and were able to conduct several interviews—via e-mail, Skype, and in person—to learn more about the specific approaches each group takes in its conflict resolution efforts. (See Appendix B for a list of expert interviews). Our research was limited by several factors. First, the vast number and complexity of conflicts and conflict resolution efforts worldwide means that our sample is very small. In addition, the relatively short time-frame for this project and the fact that we were not able to travel means that our work was, by necessity, done without visiting the conflict locations. Finally, communication is difficult in some conflict areas that have a multiplicity of local conflict resolution efforts, meaning that we had a difficult time tracking down some of the groups we found in our online research. Nonetheless, the contacts we were able to make provided rich insights into a wide range of good practices in local conflict resolution.

RESEARCH RATIONALE:

Our sample included three African countries because the majority of ongoing conflicts and peacekeeping operations currently take place in Africa. Furthermore, conflict-affected countries in Africa provide numerous examples of conflict resolution efforts that involve local-level civil society groups or NGOs. For example, current conditions and local interventions in the Central African Republic (CAR) provide good examples of reconciliation and social cohesion efforts, which have been particularly important in addressing inter-communal tensions between Muslims and Christians.

In recent decades, numerous wars and political instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo have hindered the country's economic development and social development, despite the presence of a number of UN peacekeeping missions. The good sign is that hope is growing due to the external donors and foreign intervention. However, the Democratic Republic of Congo is still undergoing conflicts between communities, and pre-election violence and killings, especially in the border regions. In addition, the situations in neighboring countries including Rwanda, Central African Republic, Uganda and Sudan have made conflict at the community level even worse.¹ Congo's conflicts include tension over access to and control of natural resources, conflicts among different armed groups, communal/mass violence, and inter or intra community conflicts. The DRC case illustrates different types of conflicts related to peacekeeping and civilian protection, which in turn inform applicable recommendations.

Guatemala offered an opportunity to analyze an environment where citizens continue to be impacted by violence and conflict even though a long-running civil war ended in the 1990s and a UN peacekeeping mission has ended. This post-conflict condition demonstrates the on-going local efforts to continue protecting civilians which could be incorporated into future peacekeeping efforts and better serve civilian populations. The methods employed by NGOs on the local level in Guatemalan communities can further inform areas which were inadequately addressed in the previous UN peacekeeping mission. Latin America was studied broadly, but Guatemala was studied specifically due to its on-going corruption and violence despite the efforts of the UN verification mission.

Lebanon is a post-conflict society which remains divided along ethnic and religious lines. The delicate internal balance reached by Lebanese domestic actors after the withdrawal of all foreign forces by 2006, has so far remained intact. However there remain serious causes of concern; armed sectarian groups including Hezbollah, the influx of refugees from Syria, and the flow of weapons and fighters between Lebanon and the Syrian Civil War have all put enormous stress on the internal balance in Lebanon. This case offers a chance to examine what local efforts at conflict resolution in stressed post-conflict societies can be effectively transplanted into other cases.

South Sudan is a unique case because of its recent independence from Sudan and ongoing ethnic, communal and factional conflict areas within this new country. The recent creation of South Sudan's unity government in April 2016 (while our research was concluding) will continue to influence how civilians are affected on a local level. NGOs address many types of peace and capacity building at the local level by training people in civil participation, mediation, how to engage youth and supporting advocacy on a range of issues.

CONFLICT TYPOLOGIES:

After conducting preliminary research, we developed a matrix showing typologies of both conflict and local-level peacebuilding approaches informed by those particular conflict contexts. (See Appendix C for matrix.) In order to categorize observations related to our sample of world events and conflict contexts, we chose to consider five different types of conflict: communal/mass, elite, factional, foreign intervention and revolutionary. Upon identifying how these types of conflict connected to our sample of cases, we then investigated how local-level efforts have sought to promote stability and civilian protection within these different types of conflict. The five types of conflict are described below.

Communal/Mass:

Communal and mass conflicts arise when subnational identities are not recognized or adequately represented within a country's government. Moreover, inequality between different subnational and ethnic groups, in areas such as household welfare and education, causes competition that aggravates communal conflict.² Unlike factional conflict (where different factions seek to gain official political influence) communal and mass conflicts question the legitimacy of the entire government system.³ We selected this conflict type because many citizens in conflict-affected areas may identify with subnational groups without necessarily belonging to a specific fighting group; in some cases, such as in the CAR, citizens can be mobilized to engage directly in conflict. Stability deteriorates and conflicts intensify when subnational groups lack representation and self-determination.

Elite:

Elite conflict involves the elements of society that occupy the upper echelons economically, politically, militarily, or a combination of these groups. The growth of conflict occurs when these elements of society or individuals seek to disrupt the status quo to achieve greater power. Conflict tends to involve low levels of violence and employs economic and political mechanisms to advance gains in power. When elite groups mobilize their respective constituents, the threat of violence to the civilian population increases as the conflict transitions into factional conflict centered on competing power bases.

Factional:

Based in the theory of political anthropology, factionalism emerges from a group of people who formed a cohesive⁴ and contentious minority under the leadership of a common purpose. In this study factionalism is used to reference a situation in which conflict in a nation has been caused by this contentious minority. These groups reject the status quo and actively work against established authority within a society, such as state institutions, political parties, or economic interests.⁵ In "Conflict and Violence in Africa: Causes, Sources and Types" Oyeniyi argues that the main purpose of factional politics is to "influence the composition of the official power apparatus, to determine who rules in a given political center." She lists several examples in Africa, including South Sudan where regional inequalities have "intensified competition and conflict" between political groups⁶

Foreign Intervention:

Foreign intervention means government use of discretionary power over foreign societies in order to address perceived problems. The purpose of foreign intervention is to build a preferable state of affairs from the

perspective of those intervening, which may or may not correspond to what those in foreign societies perceive as a preferred state of affairs.⁷

Foreign intervention in modern Africa can be divided into four overlapping periods: Decolonization (1956-1975), the Cold War (1945-1991), the periods of state collapse (1991-2001) and the "Global War on Terror" (2001-present). The United States, the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and former colonial powers were all involved in African conflicts. During the period of state collapse (1991-2001), intra-continental intervention emerged. African governments, powers on other continents, warlords, dictators, and dissidents in neighboring countries were all engaged interventions. In the War on Terror international actors have engaged in intervention operations like Enduring Freedom in both the trans-Sahara and Horn of Africa. In general, external interests of foreign societies have become entangled with Africa's internal struggles, which escalate local-level conflicts into larger conflicts in national and international levels, leaving detrimental effects on African civilians and making conflict resolution difficult.⁸

Revolutionary:

Revolutionary war is a struggle of an ideological challenge to the legitimacy of either the state or its ruling structures and seeks to replace it with a new paradigm. Revolutionary impulses may come from any political orientation; what separates revolutionary violence from other forms of conflict is that revolutionary war takes place on an ideological and physical level.⁹ Revolutionary violence has historically been closely linked with Marxist groups, since the end of the Cold War Islamic fundamentalism has replaced Marxism as the most prominent violent extremist revolutionary ideology. In our analysis, we explore scars left behind by revolutionary conflicts in Guatemala and Lebanon.

CASE STUDIES:



UNHCR Photo - Annibale Greco

Central African Republic:

Multiple and intersecting types of conflict have impacted the Central African Republic (CAR) in recent years, after years of political instability and low level Bush War. The most recent conflict could be characterized as communal/mass, because subnational groups (Muslim groups in particular) who have not been adequately represented within the country's government took up arms. However, the 2012/2013 rebel coup also contains characteristics of revolutionary conflict. In addition, France's deployment of troops in the international effort to disarm rebel groups points to characteristics of foreign intervention.

One important identifying issue in CAR's conflict context is communal violence caused by religious tensions. What began as a clash between Muslim rebels and the Christian dominated government, escalated into inter-communal sectarian violence when Muslim Seleka rebels took over government power in 2012/2013, reportedly killing thousands of mostly-Christian civilians. After an initial peace agreement was reached and a

transitional government was established in 2014, communal conflict still continued at the local level between prominently Muslim and Christian groups, with the Christian Anti-Balaka militias attacking Muslims in revenge. Thousands of civilians were killed.¹⁰ Civilian protection and long-term political approaches taken by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (or MINUSCA) have proven to be necessary yet insufficient responses to the complex situation.

Because of the nature of the CAR conflict, local-level conflict resolution efforts designed to reduce tensions between religious communities are imperative for establishing a stable and protective environment, and numerous efforts are under way. One local peacebuilding organization that is trying to forestall renewed conflict is the Interfaith Secretariat, made up of Muslim and Christian leaders. In an interview with the online journal, *Insight on Conflict*, Rashida Mamba, a Muslim member of the Interfaith Secretariat, described how CAR's situation worsened as the conflict became increasingly characterized by interreligious conflict. To address this problem, Madame Rashida has promoted interreligious cohesion with mediation and training workshops. In regards to community leaders promoting peace, Madame Rashida states, "We no longer see the religious differences because we have one common objective: to seek peace and to bring peace back which has led everybody to gather; Catholics Protestants, Muslims. We all share one single objective, peace."¹¹ By focusing on common goals, such as reestablishing a stable environment, community leaders are able to promote a more peaceful coexistence between various religious groups, hopefully preventing future outbreaks of conflict.

Similarly, *Search for Common Ground*, a leading international conflict resolution NGO, leads several projects in CAR that are designed to reduce religious tensions. Projects include inter-faith dialogue through group meetings, participatory theater, soccer matches and radio journalism. *Search for Common Ground* has identified group discussions, constructive journalism and engaging religious leaders who support peace as necessary ways to manage counterproductive rumors and promote tolerance, which in turn reduce religious tensions.¹²

Communal-level religious tensions in CAR have prompted a corresponding peacebuilding response from community leadership. Efforts by the Interfaith Secretariat and *Search for Common Ground* provide examples of good practices that can be used to effectively reduce religious tensions and promote reconciliation among disputing sectors in CAR and could be used elsewhere. These good practices have strengthened CAR's capacity to resolve conflicts and promote more peaceful living among Muslims and Christians throughout the country.

Democratic Republic of Congo:

The conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo represent a complex mix of typologies that have shifted over time, and differ from region to region within the country, leaving millions displaced. Rebel groups have attacked civilian populations and targeted women and children in particular. Most regions in the DRC,

SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND: CAR

- Addresses religious tensions through group discussions, participatory theater, constructive journalism, identifying shared principles and engaging religious leaders who support peace
- Establishes community buy-in through impartiality and enhancing local partner organizations
- Measures impact through beneficiary feedback and conflict scans that monitor community-level change

especially in the east, remain active war zones. This provides a context for local NGOs to undertake missions of engagement and conflict resolution down to the community level in order to protect civilians and promote conflict resolution. The primary context of conflicts is related to communal/mass conflicts within or between communities. There are several specific types of conflict resolution efforts underway that address different aspects of the conflict.

The first type of conflict resolution involves community reconciliation in war zones. Local NGOs, like Action des Jeunes pour le Developpement Communautaire et la Paix (Youth Action for Community Development and Peace--ADECOP) in the Gamo and Masisi regions, mobilize youth engagement in war zones to achieve lasting peace by building a cohesive and resilient community. ADECOP attempts to increase awareness and understanding of the meaning of community organizing for peace, democracy and development. In addition, they strengthen and organize advocacy skills among local youth constituencies and other community actors who support local actions that address the issues of young people and their communities. They facilitate the spaces and channels for youth engagement in public life, along with other actors, both local and external, and advance knowledge and inform policymaking in the areas of youth, peacebuilding and community-building action.¹³

Another important aspect of conflict resolution is the protection of and empowerment of women and children in war zones. For example, in the Ituri region, local NGOs like Forum des Mamans de l'Ituri (The Mothers' Forum of Ituri--FOMI) support women's rights and denounce violence against women and their children in the war zone. FOMI's mission is to unite, educate and encourage women to participate to meet their households' needs in the community. It also supports a gendered approach to human rights protection. FOMI has developed 36 women's organizations in Bunia and five territorial networks of women's organizations, and has trained more than 200 women from 90 organizations in conflict prevention management. Local NGOs have supported and reinserted into the community more than 1,850 victims of sexual violence and 263 ex-combatants via income-generating activities. More than 2,500 returnee families have received necessary aid in the form of community reinsertion kits. Mobile units operate on the community-level (for men and women) to increase capacity for peaceful co-habitation and inter-community mediation. FOMI has created 162 small 'Mothers for Peace' groups in five territories in order to tackle insecurity and human rights abuses (military, administrative and sexual violence abuses). Human rights, including women's rights, responsible citizenship and the emergence of female leadership have been greatly promoted at the community level.¹⁴



Lendu "Mama" with her son in front of the mud hut - DR CONGO - Christophe Stramba-Badiali

The third approach is conflict victim support. Local NGOs like HEAL Africa, a Christian organization, support victims of conflicts in eastern DRC. HEAL operates hospitals, offers emergency aid, and addresses the long-term social impact of the conflict. HEAL provides both medical/surgical care and psychosocial care to victims of rape and gender-based violence, but also sponsors community groups of both men and women to end sexual violence. It has also provided basic economic support for survival, legal assistance to the victims of violence to help end impunity for crimes, micro-credit and training in income-generating activities for communities for victims of conflict.¹⁵

INITIATIVES POUR LA RÉCONCILIATION COMMUNAUTAIRE (INIREC) DRC

- Prevents and reduces conflicts and interpersonal violence between and within communities through information sharing, dialogue, capacity building and projects that build intercommunity interaction
- Aims to reduce gender-based violence and human right violations
- Supports socio-economic reintegration and protection of vulnerable groups (ex-combatants, victims of rape and sexual violence, the displaced, returnees, young people and children at risk)
- Mobilizes local communities to participate in civic education, allowing them to fight non-violently for lasting democratic and social change by reclaiming their rights and fighting against injustice, corruption and impunity

Possibly unique to Congo among the countries we studied, are local efforts to address the nexus between climate change and natural resources conflicts. Conflicts over exploitation of natural resources are mainly between local communities and timber companies. Local NGOs such as *Héritier du Développement au Congo (HDC)* set up local committees to monitor the sustainable management of natural resources, ensures the guidelines are followed, and facilitates dialogues among actors in order to prevent conflict and preserve the forests. This local-level NGO aims to peacefully resolve conflicts over the limits of protected conservation areas that have broken out between local authorities, local communities and the Congolese Institute of the Conservation of Nature officials. HDC supports local communities in the protection of contested areas and sustainable management of forests, which contributes to sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation. This includes trying to help set up sustainable ecosystem services for communities. Promotion of ecosystem resilience and climate change, in and around the protected areas, is another target. These community NGOs promote the exchange of information between peacebuilding and development actors, local organizations and local authorities.¹⁶

The fifth type of DRC conflict resolution challenge is community conflict and interpersonal conflict within community. Inter- and intra-community violence, gender-based violence and human rights violations are heavily present conflicts in the DRC. Local NGOs such as *Initiatives pour la Réconciliation Communautaire (Initiative for Community Reconciliation--INIREC)* focus on peacekeeping between and within communities, community development, protection of vulnerable groups and human rights. It also tries to improve community life by reducing hunger and HIV spread. INIREC works to prevent and reduce the incidence of conflicts and interpersonal violence between and within communities through information sharing, dialogue, capacity building and projects that build intercommunity interaction. Gender-based violence and human rights violations are also targets for reduction. In this way, the socio-economic reintegration and protection of vulnerable groups (ex-combatants, victims of rape and sexual violence, the displaced, returnees, young people and children at risk) can be supported. Other goals include reducing the prevalence and contamination rates of HIV/AIDS, to reduce hunger and poverty by strengthening livelihoods,¹⁷ and to work with key people in the middle (policymakers, military and customary, civil society, youth and women leaders).¹⁸

Guatemala and Colombia:

Several guerilla wars in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s typify elite/revolutionary conflict that also contained elements of ethnic conflict. Guatemala was the focus of intensive UN and NGO conflict resolution measures throughout this time. The end of the Cold War

opened the door in the 1990s for a de-escalation of the conflicts in Guatemala that had been sustained by foreign influence over the preceding three decades. Given the amount of arms and number of rebel fighters, efforts to disarm, demobilize, and repatriate the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) forces were the core objective of UN peacekeeping in Guatemala. A notable good practice employed even before the UN Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) began in 1994 was the establishment of eight disarmament camps in the areas within Guatemala known for the highest incidents of fighting. Two concentric rings were placed around the camps, the innermost ring was exclusively for URNG forces, and the outer ring was a boundary area where only local police forces could enter. And finally, Guatemalan military forces could be present anywhere outside of the camp boundary areas. The separation of combatants provided a sufficient level of trust for the URNG forces to feel comfortable turning their weapons and ammunition over to MINUGUA peacekeepers.

The presence of 155 United Nations personnel facilitated the peaceful disarmament of weapons in 1994.¹⁹ One hundred thirty-two of the total group were international military personnel who were present for security and as subject matter experts for the control of arms and ordnance. Thirteen additional medical staff were present to support response to emergent medical conditions which might arise during the transfer of weapons. The presence of international observers provided a trusted, third-party agent to act as an observer for maintaining the boundaries established during negotiations of MINUGUA. The entire effort relied on both sides trusting the third party to keep the disarmament process fair. Since the Guatemalan Army and URNG forces did not trust each other directly, the UN observers provided a new medium in which trust could be placed by both sides of the conflict.

The framework for Guatemalan conflict resolution negotiations focused heavily on national approaches and began in the mid-1980's with the election of civilian political leaders. Initial talks between stakeholders began officially when the Commission on National Reconciliation was formed internally to Guatemala. Various talks were held over the next decade with stakeholders including government officials, military leaders, agrarian-based exporters, and the URNG.²⁰ The inclusion of many key stakeholders in the peace talks ensured the difficult nuances of the conflict were all addressed. There was an initial understanding that economic, social, and human rights concerns, in addition to the obvious political disagreements, were critical. The negotiations took up each topic individually, allowing for slow progress to be made over time while conflict continued between the groups. Following a series of separate agreements in the early 1990s, the two sides were able to move forward with signing an all-encompassing peace accord in 1996 that allowed disarmament to begin. However, these accords did little to hold the government accountable in the long term for agreements to counter internal corruption and to provide social services to underdeveloped indigenous communities. These critical gaps in government support created a vacuum in which transnational criminal organizations were able to build their complex economic structures, which enticed communities into violent activity that endures long after the end of formal conflict.

By contrast, Colombia's on-going peace negotiations amongst the various factions have focused to a far greater extent on social support and economic stability throughout regions that are prone to conflict. In Central America, long-term stability has been undermined by government corruption, lack of economic opportunity, and the influence of transnational criminal organizations. In contrast, the Colombian government has provided greater support to communities particularly impacted by conflict in an effort to prevent the spread of new violence of the type seen in Central America's "Northern Triangle." Government mechanisms for combating internal corruption and provisions for economic opportunity have given the fragile peace process a better foundation for long-term success.²¹ Since Colombia is in the early stages of the peace process, it is at risk not only for back-sliding into political conflict, but also for becoming a haven for the formation of

new drug cartels. The power vacuum that inherently exists when resistance groups capitulate to established governments leaves civilians at risk for new conflict to destabilize their lives. The provision of broader social support in the Colombian peace process than what was seen in MINUGUA offers a more promising foundation for long-term civilian protection.

Lebanon:

The waves of conflict that have rippled through Lebanon over the past half century have cut along sectarian, confessional and ideological lines. The eruption of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 has drawn fighters out from Lebanon and pushed nearly two million refugees into Lebanon.²² While open conflict in Lebanon has subsided, communal tension continues to exist between Christian and Muslims communities and interreligious ethnic tension among Sunni, Shia, Druze and Christian communities as well. Foreign intervention remains an overhanging threat as well; although with Syria in chaos intervention is more likely to come from Israel. If the pressure of Syrian refugees continues to destabilize Lebanon, Israel may decide to intervene militarily in Lebanon again. The tensions inside Lebanon and the pressures from outside it have produced a fragile internal balance in Lebanese communities and have also produced the need for a wide variety of conflict resolution strategies.

Lebanon's challenges come from internal division and from the pressure of the Syrian refugee crisis. Several examples of conflict resolution concentrate on healing the divisions present in Lebanese society and dealing with the surge of refugees. Lebanese communities continue to live in near total sectarian division²³ and stopping reproduction of sectarian tensions among school-aged children has proven difficult for school administrators.²⁴ Many local and international NGOs have made it their mission to bring their message and conflict resolution efforts into Lebanon's schools. Dealing with the refugee crisis in Lebanon has further stressed Lebanese resources. International and local actors have sought to address some of the problems of the Syrian refugee community, from ensuring they have basic survival necessities to attempting and halt the recruitment of future fighters.

Keeping peace among Lebanese sectarian communities, to avoid the return of civil war, has been the core mission of several NGOs. In the wake of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war, a new batch of NGOs emerged which concentrate their efforts on conflict prevention on the individual and micro scale. Fighters for Peace, a Lebanese organization, was established in 2014 and seeks through education to dissuade young people from taking up arms or the use of violence. Ex-fighters from the Lebanese Civil War hold workshops to discuss their experiences with young people explaining how they became embroiled in over 15 years of conflict.²⁵ They use very fluid practices as each event is shaped by the experiences of the individual ex-fighters speaking and the age and sectarian composition of the audience.²⁶ The organization has also begun efforts to train ex-fighters from Syria to reach out to the refugee communities to halt recruitment efforts. Fighters for Peace trains these ex-fighters in their techniques of public speaking and outreach to connect with the Syrian population.²⁷

FIGHTERS FOR PEACE: LEBANON

- In 2015 Fighters for Peace held 50 events for high school and college age students. 5,000 students drawn from all sectarian groups were estimated to participated in these events.
- They have traveled to Northern Ireland and South Africa to observe and share conflict resolution best practices with local NGOs.
- Fighters for Peace has begun efforts to teach its methods to Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, with over 600 attending 5 workshops held in 2015.



Fighters for Peace Program. Fighters for Peace Facebook Page

Ex-fighters seek to teach the consequences of the use of violence while other groups like Farah Al Ataa, another local organization, seek to teach conflict resolution techniques and community improvement efforts. Farah Al Ataa organizes youth workshops on conflict resolution and has also engaged in efforts to improve the lives of prisoners, ensure clean sources of drinking water and rebuild homes destroyed by conflict.²⁸ The techniques Farah Al Ataa uses are more formalized than those of Fighters for Peace, the age of the organization, which was founded in 1985, means it has much more organizational experience. Youth workshops follow a broad pattern that has proven successful, while local efforts are more tailored to the needs of individual communities.

The Medrar Foundation is a charitable organization that serves both Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees. In 2013 Medrar began work on the Akabeya Center in southern Lebanon, which is planned to house more than 650 refugees with basic household utilities and sanitation.²⁹ In addition, Medrar's strategy includes efforts to build local cooperation between Syrians and Lebanese to help integrate the new population. Medrar is a larger, more centralized organization than either Fighters for Peace or Farah Al Ataa, and so has a much greater connection to international NGOs and humanitarian groups. Medrar uses practices learned from around the world in its conflict prevention efforts and trust building between Lebanese and Syrian communities. Medrar relies more on traditional large scale efforts than on the smaller, more tailored approaches of Fighters for Peace or Farah Al Ataa.

South Sudan:

South Sudan's complex security and civilian protection environment and its militarized society developed through decades of civil war in the former unitary state of Sudan (from 1955 to 1971).³⁰ The second civil war from 1983 to 2005 fueled the deepening ethnic animosities, including within what is now South Sudan, and culminated in South Sudan's independence in 2011 after a lengthy, United Nations supervised process.³¹

Currently, the majority of conflict in South Sudan is Elite/Factional, Communal or resource based. Supported by "ethnic power bases," much of the conflict is perpetuated by top ranking or elite officials who encourage ethnic division among the South Sudanese people. Because President Salva Kiir is Dinka, his main supporters include members of the Dinka (one of the largest ethnic groups in South Sudan) and his military generals. Newly appointed Vice President Riek Machar (who was the leader of South Sudan's rebel faction) is backed by the Nuer, South Sudan's other largest ethnic group.³²

Despite the long-term civil wars, South Sudan has traditions of peacemaking and reconciliation through the leaders of ethnic groups and churches and through efforts of international organizations. At the national level, the regional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), was the main mediator during the 22 month-long mediation process between Kiir and Machar.³³ Local peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts were in action before, during, and now after the mediation process and have been influenced by the international community (United States, Ethiopia, and Kenya).³⁴

There are numerous non-governmental local conflict resolution efforts that address communal tensions. Training of youth in Jonglei and Unity states, facilitated by the locally-based Grassroots Relief and Development Agency (GRED), has assisted in the development of peace networks in South Sudan. These networks allow peace and reconciliation work to connect communities from across different ethnic divides.³⁵ This organization focuses on reducing poverty, hunger and illiteracy, which helps create stability in the region and contributes to building a system in which civil participation can be practiced.

Concordis International, a London-based peace-building organization, aims to build long term relationships among communities that contribute to post-conflict nation-building. Their strategy provides “informal, inclusive and low-profile consultations; research into issues underlying the conflict; providing possible ways forward and practical solutions.”³⁶

Dialogue and Research Initiative (DRI) is another South Sudanese organization that uses research to promote peacebuilding. DRI focuses on encouraging active citizenship and democratic participation to promote accountability within the country.³⁷ DRI conducts research and performs advocacy on issues “such as gender equality, transitional justice, and democratic participation.” DRI has worked at a local level, but also partnered with the UNDP in 2015 to facilitate a public debate on accountability and Security Sector Reform in South Sudan.³⁸

The Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is a Minnesota-based NGO with a presence in numerous conflict zones around the world. NP utilizes unarmed civilian protection to provide “direct protection to civilians under threat” and compliments the armed peacekeeping forces already stationed in country. It works on a local level, maintaining a physical presence of international and local volunteers to help ease intercommunal tensions at the micro level. In an interview, NP South Sudan representative told us the NP method is successful because of

NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE: SOUTH SUDAN

NonViolent PeaceForce was invited to South Sudan by the Institute for the Promotion of Civil Society (IPCS), and the Sudanese Organization for Nonviolence and Development (SONAD) to share their expertise in operations before and during the 2011 elections and referendum

- NP has since established 9 field offices that seek cooperation and coordination with all levels of the community including community leaders, elected officials, civil servants and military personnel. They especially work with women, youth and traditional leaders and employ nonviolent practices to protect civilians and promote peace



A young girl hangs the South Sudan flag.

Timothy McKulka, USAID 2011

NP's ability to establish a long-term, non-partisan, comprehensive programming that considers the needs of the local population.³⁹ These programs are successful and sustainable because the NP model promotes local civilian ownership of programs even while maintaining a consistent global model of intervention.⁴⁰

Each of these non-governmental organizations works to promote equality, accountability, and peacebuilding, and to support long-term conflict resolution goals and strategies. Unfortunately, the instability of the government affects all nation building and development efforts, including local conflict resolution efforts in South Sudan. This instability and continued elite-level fighting between rebel groups place peace agreements and ultimately civilians at risk.

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Crosscutting Themes:

As our research on just these five conflict areas showed, there are a multiplicity of types and formats of conflict resolution efforts. Nonetheless, even in this diverse sample, some common themes and approaches in local conflict resolution emerged.

Social Cohesion:

Several of the case studies point to good practices for building social cohesion between conflicting communal groups, such as religious or ethnic groups. Religious tensions sometimes escalate to violence because of specific religiously affiliated fighting groups, as in Lebanon and CAR, but conflict also often involves a general mistrust between different mainstream religious communities. Local-level reconciliation efforts play an important role in building trust between mainstream communal groups, which could help avoid the escalation of mistrust into conflict. In order to measure this type of improved trust, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) CAR adopts methodology such as obtaining evidence and feedback from beneficiaries as well as monitoring and evaluating small changes in communities via conflict scans, applied every two or three months.⁴¹

Active participation and buy-in from a wide range of local community members is essential for programs to successfully contribute to a more stable and protective environment. Thomas Paul Banze, SFCG Country Director in the CAR, describes several methods that have contributed to SFCG's positive outcomes in its programming. SFCG adopts practices of impartiality and supporting local actors. Local-level partner organizations also facilitate SFCG's acceptance within CAR's diverse community.⁴²

Conflict-affected countries with similar contexts often share common themes in their local-level peacebuilding approaches. For example, religious groups in multiple regions of the world work to address religious tensions by identifying common objectives, such as shared religious principles. Findings from the case study analysis indicate that effective methods for building social cohesion include group discussions, constructive journalism and engaging religious leaders who support peace. SFCG CAR highlights common objectives between Muslims and Christians by enlisting them to find passages in both the Bible and the Koran that demonstrate common values, which promotes living together. In addition, SFCG CAR organizes inter-community visits in order to promote understanding about how each religious group lives and how each group has been affected by the crisis.⁴³ By countering unproductive characterizations of different religious groups, local peacebuilding groups can promote reconciliation and social cohesion within diverse communities.

Corruption:

Corruption within government organizations can foster an environment in which conflict is perpetuated long after the resolution efforts of external NGOs and international government organizations. The effect of corruption on civilian populations is important because policy becomes a tool for politicians to enrich themselves, rather than a tool for citizens to receive reliable services, causing resentment. The former President of Guatemala, Otto Perez Molina, resigned in September 2015 and was subsequently arrested for corruption charges stemming from customs bribes.⁴⁴ As the rule of law breaks down, government agencies become disconnected from the people they were meant to serve, and instead focuses on the personal motives of officials, building tensions that lead to conflict.

The ongoing impact of violence and political disenfranchisement has lead human rights groups within Guatemala to continue speaking in opposition to the government's corruption and inability to provide reliable protection to citizens. Human rights groups and political activists are particularly vulnerable to the effects of corruption because they end up being the targets for assassination or kidnappings. UDEFEGUA is a human rights defender who accompanies these activists for support and protection. Additionally, the presence of a non-partisan international group such as the Nonviolent Peaceforce to escort these human rights defenders in their work makes it more difficult for transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) or government military officials to order activists who demand accountability to be killed.⁴⁵ The international presence elevates the level of negative attention that could result from targeting a group of human rights defenders. Furthermore, having the physical presence of an international NGO allows the human rights group to focus on their investigations and meetings while third-party NGOs like the Nonviolent Peaceforce can monitor the surroundings for potential threats.

One of the key agreements in MINUGUA was to transition control of internal security over the Guatemalan Army to a newly trained group of local police forces who could manage their individual local security issues. This would decentralize power, moving it away from national level decision-makers and toward newly created local forces who would, in principle, be more accountable to local populations for their actions to the local leaders. Unfortunately, follow through on ending the Guatemalan Army's role in policing local populations has been too slow and undermines the commitments made in MINUGUA, making the efforts of local NGOs more difficult. According to the Guatemalan human rights defender group, UDEFEGUA, "in 2008, 12 human rights defenders were murdered in Guatemala, and 220 attacks were listed mainly against the trade-unionists and also among the peasant leaders."⁴⁶

Government officials' collaboration with TCOs or unwillingness to prosecute the crimes of TCOs further endangers the lives of local civilian populations, and human rights and peacebuilding activists in Guatemala.

Human rights abuses that take place due to the actions of gangs and drug traffickers are largely being ignored. Extortion and directed assassinations increase the unwillingness of public officials to take action against these groups. When these abuses take place, human rights defender networks consider themselves “firefighters” rushing to the aid of those in their time of need to provide protection, human rights legal assistance, or evidence collection for murders and kidnappings.⁴⁷ Similar to the peacekeeping presence the United Nations provides during disarmament efforts, the presence of human rights defender NGOs minimizes the ability of governmental agencies and TCOs to freely murder or kidnap human rights proponents protecting the vulnerable civilians of on-going conflicts. A greater inclusion of these groups in the long-term conflict resolution process could have a comparable impact on civilian protection that UN disarmament missions.

Empowerment and Protection of Women and Children:

Many organizations focus in particular on women—whether empowering them as actors in the midst of conflict, urging that they be engaged in formal peace negotiations and local conflict resolution efforts, or attending to their particular needs as frequent victims of conflict. War and conflict have an impact that lasts for years after the fighting ends, with particular impact on women. Many women are left widowed and many children are orphaned. Women struggle for both their own livelihoods and support their children—including keeping them out of future conflict—in a post-conflict situation. Therefore, women playing an active role in stopping violence appears significant; it is meaningful for not only themselves but also their families and communities. To a great extent, the participation of women in formal peace process and as active agents in conflict resolution ensures their rights and helps build peace, ranging from a local level to national level. Women’s development, peace, security and human rights are all intertwined with one another.

Unfortunately, women continue to be absent from many formal peace negotiations, especially in Africa. For example, women were left out of the final negotiations of the Lome Peace Accord of 1999 held in Lome, Togo, to end the civil war in Sierra Leone. Women are more often regarded only as victims of conflict that need to be protected rather than as agents of change for peace. Veteran Editor at the African Woman and Child Features, Jane Godia said in an interview with Gender Governance Kenya that “While women remain a minority of combatants and perpetrators of war, they increasingly suffer the greatest harm.” She added, “Parties in conflict situations often rape women, sometimes using systematic rape as a tactic of war.” Such views make the elimination of violence against women in conflict prone areas more challenging.

Many NGOs active in the DRC operate on the principle that women should be treated as agents of peace who can contribute to positive political change. Women’s inclusion is regarded as a strength for sustainable peace by the UN Security Council. In October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which “recognizes the role of women in strengthening their participation in decision-making, ending sexual violence and impunity and providing an accountability system.” Much more needs to be done to empower women in the local level. Women should play a more active role in peace talks and post-conflict reconstruction and they should be empowered to be a strength to eliminate the gender-based violence rather than the victims.⁴⁸

The Quaker organization INEREC is an example of a group that has responded to needs in their community and worked to secure resources necessary to support their efforts. In an email exchange with us, INEREC described their intervention strategies, which include training workshops to strengthen the capacity of local communities, “connecting projects” to build constructive relationships among ethnic groups; monitoring of security forces; and advocacy to influence policy-making. INEREC offered several recommendations for advancing civilian protection and local conflict resolution, including: establish socio-economic reintegration projects (such as vocational training) for women and abandoned children; organize monitoring activities to

follow the situation of women and children in conflict zones; strengthen education on the rights of women and children; and provide medical, legal and psychological assistance for women and vulnerable children. INEREC described challenges that small groups operating on the ground face, particularly with regard to funding—especially the lack of funding, resistance of local authorities to their activities, and inaccessibility to areas of conflict. Many groups seeking to advance local conflict resolution face these challenges.⁴⁹

Recruitment:

Conflict depends on the continuous recruitment of new fighters and disrupting the supply of recruits of new fighters is a basic way to deescalate the use of violence and promote conflict prevention. The recruitment of fighters results in part from failures to tackle problems like corruption, religious tension and building local democratic processes; however, once youth become combatants solving these problems becomes nearly impossible without first convincing fighters to seek peaceful solutions. In Guatemala the formal disarmament process shifted young people from being recruited by political factions to gangs, while Lebanon offers the best examples of effective anti-recruitment efforts.

In Lebanon the average age for recruitment of new fighters was under 18.⁵⁰ The recruiters of new fighters and those who attempt to halt recruitment are usually at least 10 years older than prospective fighters.⁵¹ The role that ex-fighters can play in the process of halting recruitment is one that organizations should take advantage of. Several Lebanese NGOs have programs that train ex fighters in public speaking and offer them leadership roles in their communities. Gangs in Guatemala rely on the recruitment of young individuals to perpetuate and expand their conflicts to new communities. Gangs have turned to forced recruitment of youths through threats of violence to family members to increase the numbers of new fighters. Further research should be conducted to examine whether the anti-recruitment techniques in Lebanon also work in Guatemala. The experiences provided by former fighters helps to minimize the voluntary enlistment of a new generation of fighters.

Programs that offer ex-fighters a role in society are beneficial both in their effect of slowing recruitment and in giving a sense of purpose and direction to ex fighters and keeping them from taking up arms again. Programs that make us of ex fighters who share their experiences with the use of violence and explain why they gave it up must be deeply imbedded in their local communities. Older ex fighters enjoy a special position of respect in many of their communities, which make them ideal candidates to lead anti-recruitment efforts. Outside organizations should focus on giving them the tools they need to engage with new potential fighters.

Civic Engagement and Democracy:

“Democracy is a general method of nonviolence;”⁵² it encourages good governance, which ultimately decreases corruption, supports human rights (including rights of women and children), and reduces the ethnic and socio economic divide locally in many conflict areas. Supporting international, national and local institutions that promote democracy and active participation in the democratic process is crucial to protecting civilians. It is both a long term and short term goal that governments and institutions can take steps to secure now.

The Dialogue and Research Initiative (DRI), Grassroots Relief and Development Agency (GREDA), Initiative for Peace Communication Association (IPCA), The Policy Accommodation Initiatives and Research (PAIR) and SOS Sahel South Sudan all work to promote building peace, good governance and democracy in South Sudan.

These organizations have several successful initiatives that include research, advocacy, trainings, workshops, public lecture, policy and debates to fill the gaps in current policy and discourage conflict in communities.

The work of these organizations opens a necessary dialogue at local levels to promote democracy and ultimately protect civilian's rights and decrease the risk of recurring violence. However, much of local conflict is fed by what happens on the national level as well as vice versa. In the case of South Sudan, ethnic tensions have only worsened as a result of the two-year civil war between President Kiir and now Vice President Machar. In states with sharp ethnic divides, "decentralization is necessary for effective public participation."⁵³ Because South Sudan has not yet fully established a unity government nor has it specified the details of its Comprehensive Peace Agreement with Sudan, the likelihood of future conflict is strong without democratic reform.⁵⁴

"North and South [Sudan] still must agree on the future of citizenship, currency, the sharing of oil revenues, and security arrangements along the borders"⁵⁵ before the region can become stable. All of the aforementioned decisions will need to take place, democratically and peacefully to establish a precedence for both the new South Sudanese unity government and region.

While these national scale efforts are under way, many groups are fostering civic engagement at the local level as part of conflict resolution efforts. A key reason that many youth take up arms is a feeling of frustration and the inability to make a positive impact in their communities in any way but through armed conflict. Offering an outlet for these emotions is a powerful way to channel youths away from becoming fighters. Local civic engagement programs that teach youth the basics of how to engage local levels of government to effect non violent change in their communities have proven successful in Lebanon in slowing recruitment efforts. Civic engagement programs also prepare youth for further leadership roles in their communities.

Comparison of Approaches:

As even this limited study shows, good practices in local conflict resolution range from micro NGOs that have sprung up in the midst of conflict zones (and which sometimes receive outside funding) to on-the-ground efforts by global NGOs that seek to promote local efforts through their physical presence and sponsorship of conflict resolution activities. Efforts also range from activities directly focused on resolving or preventing renewed conflict through activities like inter-communal dialogue or anti-recruitment programs to activities that seek to empower or engage specific groups, such as women or youth, in order to promote the type of civic engagement that can help reduce conflict.

The case studies developed in this report demonstrate contrasting findings based on differing conflict situations. For example, unlike efforts to improve overall trust between religious communities, disputes over natural resources require specific negotiation over conflicting positions. Objectives include implementing and monitoring sustainable solutions that fulfill the vital needs of community members who are competing for limited resources. Like interreligious dialogue, efforts to disarm or prevent new fighters from engaging in conflict can also take place at the local level. However, disarmament practices differ from more general social cohesion efforts because the target group includes specific former or potential fighters, rather than the more general population. In contrast, local efforts to promote active citizenship and democratic participation seek to engage all citizens in order to build a more stable and accountable government. Almost all conflict situations are highly complex and involve many different, yet often interconnected, ways to build a more

stable and protective environment. More study is needed to address the question of whether greater effort should be made to make connections among the different types of activities (e.g. anti-recruitment/disarmament, which focuses on fighters, and empowering women or promoting intercommunal dialogue) or the relative effectiveness of home grown versus globally sponsored efforts. Most likely, there is no one answer.

CONCLUSION:

Recommendations:

Based on identified good practices and themes, several general courses of action should be adopted or strengthened in order to better support local-level civilian protection efforts. While these recommendations will not comprehensively address all relevant aspects of highly complex conflict situations, they will strengthen several key components of local-level conflict resolution and prevention processes.

- 1. The conflict areas we researched would all benefit from an increase in the capacity of institutions and processes that promote good governance. In addition, increased empowerment of and civic engagement by groups, including women and youth, is essential for strengthening institutions. Good governance includes accountability from elected officials, representation of all members of a population and civic participation. Civic participation positively impacts human rights, decreases corruption and reduces ethnic and socio economic divides, providing a safer environment for civilians. Disarmament and reintegration efforts for combatants contribute to a more protective environment, but active participation by citizens is crucial for achieving overall stability. We recommend that international, national and local-level peacebuilding organizations promote buy-in and active participation by all citizens, including specific groups such as women and youth, to create more secure states.*
- 2. Ex-fighters playing a greater role in anti-recruitment efforts have yielded positive results in Lebanon, sharing their experiences with violence and its lasting consequences. We recommend that the techniques used by these organizations should be supported as they are effective and are applicable to many conflict situations. Ex-fighters combine both credibility and a model for successful non-violent conflict solving. Organizations in Lebanon trained ex-fighters in public speaking, rhetoric and non-violent conflict resolution techniques and used them as their point people in dealing with youth and potential recruits. Drawing on their own personal experiences as fighters they were more effectively able to impart their message and conflict resolution techniques than non-fighters were. Finally, employing ex-fighters in these programs also felt they themselves had more of a purpose and place in their communities making them less likely to return to violence themselves.*
- 3. Local-level peacebuilding initiatives require long-term and fast-disbursing funding sources in order to maintain ongoing and consistent programming. While global NGOs also face funding challenges, the situation is particularly acute for small organizations operating in remote conflict areas, such as eastern DRC. Money from international donors can take months to flow from donors through large international NGOs down to local level actors. In addition, the gap between when money is allocated and when donors look for results is too short for meaningful impacts. Local-level institutions, especially when they focus on intercommunal dialogue or empowerment of marginalized groups, are essential for building more stable and protective environments, and their missions often address*

problems that official peacekeeping missions have failed to resolve. In addition, as cited in the literature review, the UN's HIPPO report calls for increased collaboration with local peacebuilding efforts. Since funding is traditionally easier to secure in contexts of immediate and highly visible need, ongoing or preventative local efforts often struggle to secure long-term funding. We recommend that UN missions, international donors, and national governments allocate money to fund local-level institutions for long-term (i.e. five to ten year) initiatives. Local institutions contribute to a more stable environment after immediate objectives related to a UN peacekeeping mission are met.

Our team's research and findings demonstrate that much work is still needed in identifying good conflict resolution and civilian protection practices within conflict situations. For example, in-country field research would allow future researchers to look more closely at local-level programs, their policies and practices, and their overall impact in conflict-affected countries. In addition, a larger sample of examples would help to draw observations that may be more representative of all global conflict situations.

Glossary of Terms:

ADECOP - Action des Jeunes pour le Developpement

DRI- Dialogue and Research Initiative

FOMI - Forum de Mamans de l'Ituri

GREDA - Grassroots Relief and Development Agency

HDC - Heritier du Developpement au Congo

HIPPO - High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations

IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development

INIREC - Initiatives pour la Reconciliation Communautaire

IPCA - Initiative for Peace Communication Association

MINUGUA- United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

MINUSCA - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MONUC - United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

NP - Nonviolent Peaceforce

PAIR - The Policy Accommodation Initiatives and Research

SFCG - Search for Common Ground

TCO - Transnational Criminal Organization

URNG- Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca

UDEFEGUA - Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Unit

Appendix A:

LITERATURE REVIEW:

In order to develop typologies for good practices related to local civilian protection and conflict resolution, we began with a review of scholarly and policy-oriented literature on the broader subjects of conflict contexts and peacebuilding approaches. After reviewing related literature, we have found that international and scholarly institutions recognize the importance of local peacebuilding efforts. Local partnerships allow groups to best use their comparative advantage, and actively including local leaders and civil society is necessary for building social cohesion and resolving local conflict.

We chose to focus our examination of the literature based on five different conflict-affected countries. By considering a sample of conflict contexts, our research began to inform how different types of conflict require different approaches to conflict resolution.

Local Partnerships and the Central African Republic:

Sectarian violence erupted in the Central African Republic (CAR) after the Muslim rebel group Seleka took control of the government in 2012/2013.⁵⁶ CAR is an example of a country with an active UN multidimensional peacekeeping operation, but the country has a history of sectarian and religious violence that continues to inhibit prospects of a stable and protective environment.⁵⁷ Local-level efforts have responded by working to prevent or resolve local conflicts, which has led to a more protective environment at the local and often the national level. Local conflict resolution approaches have played an important role in addressing immediate regional needs, which prevents local disputes from escalating into larger-scale violence, as had happened at the time of the Seleka takeover.

Scholarly literature supports the assertion that partnerships between local organizations and the international community are a valuable and efficient way to foster civilian protection in conflict areas. In the journal *International Peacekeeping*, Malte Brosig describes how these partnerships have become an appealing approach because both local and international organizations share values related to civilian protection, and interventions can gain capacity by combining resources and skills from various sources.⁵⁸ In *Global Governance*, Touko Piiparinen adds that humanitarian interventions are most effective when regional and international groups both use their comparative advantage. For example, regional groups can lead efforts that are backed with technological and financial support from the international community (i.e. UN, EU, and NATO).⁵⁹

Recent UN reports also highlight the benefits of actively incorporating local efforts into greater UN mission objectives. In a 2015 UN Security Council report on the situation in CAR, the Secretary General cited local reconciliation and mediation initiatives that were in collaboration with the Ministry of Reconciliation and the United Nations as important tools for developing local capabilities and meeting local needs.⁶⁰ Supporting local capacity (especially if aspects of a conflict exceed UN mission capacity) is important because an early and sufficient response is essential for protecting lives and minimizing an escalation in violence. The 2015 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) also emphasizes the importance of including local communities in conflict resolution and protection strategies. The report calls for strengthened regional partnerships and “shifting from merely consulting with local people to actively including them.”⁶¹ The UN has therefore signaled its willingness to engage with and support local peacekeeping efforts, as demonstrated by the examples noted above.

Local-level conflict resolution conducted by local organizations has contributed to reconciliation and social cohesion, which are crucial for establishing a more peaceful and protective environment in the CAR. Tensions between Muslims and Christians, for example, can be addressed at the local level and contribute to positive changes throughout the country. Search for Common Ground (SFCG) produced a report in 2014 that described the objectives and results of their “Better Together” project. Better Together was designed to reduce and prevent communal violence as well as promote reconciliation. The project worked with civil society groups including religious leaders, youth associations and women’s groups to support local peacebuilding initiatives in Bangui, Bossangoa and Bangassou. Better Together found that civil society groups are an integral aspect of CAR society, and these groups benefit significantly from supports that increase their organizational capacity.⁶²

Scholarly research and policy-oriented reports also cite local leaders and civil society as critical in reducing local violence. As cited by De Juan et al. in the Political Research Quarterly, strong and numerous local religious institutions lead to reduced amounts of communal violence.⁶³ The HIPPO report also identifies religious and community leaders as necessary for building social cohesion and reducing violent conflict.⁶⁴ However, the report also cautions about difficulties in identifying which local civil society groups actually represent the interests of local citizens.⁶⁵ Overall, local efforts to strengthen communities and resolve conflict have proven to be effective and well regarded by academic and international institutions.

Democratic Republic of Congo:

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) peacekeeping mission on civilian protection involves multiple organizations, including international organizations like UN, international NGOs and local organizations. This literature review intends to mainly focus on civilian protection and resolving conflicts on the local level.

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has been described as one of the world's least effective peacekeeping forces. Denis M. Tull evaluated two indicators in Peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Waging Peace and Fighting War: mandate implementation and the reduction of human suffering. The analysis indicates that failure of effective peacekeeping in the DRC results from two primary barriers. First, MONUC lacks a consistent approach and a clear concept of ‘robust peacekeeping.’ At vital moments, Tull argues peace has been waged when the mission should have used force. Secondly, it failed to adapt to a dynamic conflict environment. Vague assumptions about the conflict resolution, the behavior of local actors and the presumed benefits of ‘post-conflict’ elections contribute to the problems.⁶⁶

International peacekeeping is not always a success in the Congo. The Trouble with the Congo--Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacekeeping by Serverine Autesserre demonstrates cultural and normative understanding shared by the peacekeeping members, such as the perception of local conflict resolution as an unimportant task. That problem can explain why the UN or many other NGOs share the same understanding of the situation and the similar intervention strategies. However, it is important to realize the collective peacekeeping culture is not spread over all international interveners. Many local organizations and sub-units possess various sub-cultures and different priorities and some even contested diverse elements of the peacekeeping culture. Autesserre argues inconsistent peacekeeping culture can cause the failure of international peacekeeping.⁶⁷

To narrow down to the local level, *Local Violence, National Peace? Postwar "Settlement" in the Eastern D.R. Congo (2003–2006)* by Serverine Autesserre focuses on the sources at the local and regional level of continued local violence during the war-to-peace transition period of 2003-2006. Based on an analysis of the Kivus--a region of Eastern Congo, local dynamics which interact with the national and regional dimensions of the conflicts have been elaborated. The conclusion is that local conflicts over lands and political power tend to be self-sustaining and autonomous from the national and regional tracks even after the national and regional settlement has been achieved.⁶⁸

With regard to the typology, natural resource conflict is one which involves local interests. *Forest Resources and Rural Livelihoods: The Conflict Between Timber and Non-timber Forest Products in the Congo Basin* by Ousseynou Ndoyea & Julius Chupezi Tieguhonga dictates the conflicting interests of local rural communities and timber companies. The growing scale of timber exploitation poses a threat to the local rural livelihood and local biodiversity. The paper intends to reach a balanced approach after taking the interests of both local communities and timber companies into consideration. The approaches to a resolution of this conflict include the exclusion from harvesting of timber species that are vital to the local communities, implementation of sustainable forest management plans by timber companies, compensation for compliance with the management plan by the companies, and community involvement in monitoring activities of timber companies.⁶⁹

There are also some local organizations devoted specifically to conflict resolutions. Examples include Forum des Mamans de l'Ituri (FOMI) which analyses the situation of women and supports women's rights in the Ituri region, acts as a pressure group to condemn violent acts against women. The organization's intended actions support both women and their children. According to the FOMI's mission, "FOMI wants to see the building of a society in which women are united, educated, respected, and participate in meeting the needs of their households." Their mission includes "to support actions for the pacification of Ituri, which are led both by women and for women; to support the promotion of the gendered approach and the respect of human rights; to support the promotion of women's organizations in Ituri."⁷⁰

HEAL Africa is both a hospital and a peacebuilding organization offering support to victims of conflict in East DRC. It operates a hospital in Goma and 64 health centers located in North Kivu and Maniema provinces, as well as many programs to address the causes and longer-term social impacts of conflict. Emergency response teams and programs for helping communities recover from conflicts are two of their primary approaches. Their relevant programs include "helping the victims of rape and gender-based violence, including both medical and surgical care and psycho-social care; providing victims of conflict with basic economic support for survival; legal assistance to the victims of violence to help end impunity for crimes; micro-credit and training in income-generating activities for communities."⁷¹

Guatemala:

Many Latin American countries continue to develop their governmental processes in the post-Cold War environment and there is a wide range of literature on the challenge. The fallout from decades of political and military turmoil provides a living example of UN and international conflict resolution efforts. By contrast, Central American nations are operating in an environment where United Nations peacekeeping programs have been closed out, providing opportunities to study conflict resolution outcomes.

In the book *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace, and the Global System*, author Peter Wallenstein points out that conflict resolution is an imprecisely defined concept that shares many of its characteristics with other areas of peacekeeping and building efforts. The difficulty in defining it comes from the number of stakeholders involved in starting a peace process. The conflicts can cross state borders, can exist within one

state only but be impacted by international interests, and they can also cross non-physical borders. Often, the conflict will be about intangible things such as power, influence, or religion. They can also involve a combination of these things as demonstrated by the civil war conflicts of Central American states.⁷²

Best practices for identifying the underlying nuances behind conflict are limited, sometimes intentionally. Often times, the stakeholders involved in the conflict resolution process have underlying motives to not give up too much influence. The proxy conflicts from the 1960s and 1980s, where the U.S. and Soviet Union supported opposing sides, were entrenched due to East-West global conflict as much as to Conservative-Socialist conflict within the affected states themselves.

OAS: Peace, Security, Democracy, Development describes the critical role that international NGOs play in conflict resolution because of their capacity to connect regional differences with intrastate peace efforts. Even internal conflict frequently extends outside the borders of a single state. Bordering countries are likely to be involved in some capacity, whether through state or non-state actors. It is rare that a conflict within one nation doesn't impact the regional political, economic, and security stability of countries around them.

Jose Miguel Insulza describes how, by hosting events like Summit of the Americas, INGOs can gather the regional stakeholders to discuss the problems associated with building and maintaining peace at the local level.⁷³ The summits act as an initial stepping point to more important arbitration and negotiation events. The dialogue focuses the region on generating thoughtful solutions that are in sync across all nations. The events also bring enough attention and powerful leaders that the events themselves act as a center of gravity to jump start new efforts towards peace. Absent high profile, well organized events like Summit of the Americas, it may be difficult to generate global pressure to resolve ongoing conflicts.

The civilian-military dialogue discussed in *Towards Civil-Military Dialogue in Colombia* is a critical component to restoring peace through conflict resolution. Security forces play a significant role before and after negotiations. The actions of the Colombian military forces contributed to the atrocities which took place during decades of operations against the FARC and other leftist guerillas. Civilians have had to live in fear from attacks by both state and non-state actors. Darynell Torres claims that the military and local security forces both have to be part of the discussion at the negotiating table since they have partaken in the large scale operations to curb separatist and narcotic activities.

They are also going to be heavily involved with actions after conflict resolution talks have concluded. Disarmament of violent groups after conflict has ended has been an essential component of every major conflict studied. The removal of arms through agreements has helped transition from peacekeeping to long-term peace building. The agreements for disarmament have been a key component of conflict resolution negotiations. The military is typically the unit of government tasked with disarmament of groups.⁷⁴ It is also necessary to engage with the military prior to disarmament operations since the groups being disarmed do not have much faith in or care for the military. This lack of trust on both sides will make the disarmament process extremely fragile and tense. Best practices involve dialoguing with the military in advance where it can prevent things from erupting back into violent conflict.

Lisa Schirch and Deborah Mancini-Griffol's work in *Local Ownership In Security: Case Studies of Peacebuilding Approaches* explains the history of military intervention in conflict that exists in Latin America extends back

to the colonial period when colonial forces put down resistance by indigenous people with force. This trend continued throughout history up to the 1980s, when governments started trending towards progressive democratic processes. Despite these changes, the long history of violence created mistrust amongst civilian populations toward the military, making it more difficult to integrate the military into the conflict resolution process.

How the military responds to activities unrelated to post-conflict disarmament such as drug enforcement, gang violence, unrest in favelas, etc., impacts how well other operations in disarmament will be received by the public. Changing the methods by which the military intervenes in other situations makes it easier for them to intervene in specific areas like disarmament. When the civilian oversight of military is in strong, the organization of operations is more oriented towards peaceful political and social outcomes rather than military objectives, where the use of force could increase. The key difference is the broader consideration for public opinion. Further discussion for civilian psychology into conflict resolution would be beneficial for effective best practices.⁷⁵

On-going civilian conflict in Guatemala reflects the need for a broader approach to peacebuilding than simply disarming combatants. The United Nations MINUGUA program in Guatemala offered an effective short-term peacekeeping effort, but left a vacuum for local-level long-term peace where civilian populations were impacted by new threats from transnational criminal organizations and illicit drug trafficking. Current efforts being conducted by NGOs and governmental organizations at the local level to protect civilian populations provides valuable examples of good practices that can be incorporated into future peacekeeping processes to improve long-term, post-conflict peace outcomes.

Lebanon:

The recurrent waves of conflict in Lebanon have left deep wounds in many local communities divided along religious, ethnic and tribal lines. There have been many efforts from the international community and from local organizations to attempt to heal these wounds. In the wake of the 2006 Israeli incursion into Lebanon a new round of efforts to rebuild the country began.

The major international force for conflict prevention is the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, (UNIFIL), which functions both as a peacekeeping force between the factions within Lebanon and as a mediating force between Lebanon and neighboring states. However UNFIL has had difficulty integrating its efforts at peacekeeping and working with international NGOs focused on conflict prevention. Chiara Ruffa & Pascal Vennesson examined the efforts by Italian and French UNIFIL forces to coordinate with Italian and French NGOs. The failure of UNIFIL and the NGOs to cooperate led to a lack of trust and outright disdain between the two.⁷⁶ This lack of trust and cooperation has resulted in the underutilization of resources of UNIFIL by the NGOs and often a duplication of efforts by the two groups in their attempts to build peaceful stability.

Lebanese NGOs face their own challenges but also offer unique solutions. Religious factors that divided Lebanese society have also provided a catalyst for local peace buildings. Shawn Teresa Flanigan's examination of the motivation behind NGO peace building work found that the formal tenets of their faiths helped to motivate efforts to build peaceful communities.⁷⁷ Both Christian and Muslim workers cited scriptural sources to explain their efforts, whether the Christian commandment to love thy neighbor or Koranic verses on the importance of charity and service.⁷⁸ Religious communities also played a role in providing NGOs a source of workers. Nearly half of the workers at the NGOs Flanigan interviewed stated that they came to work in their positions due to the network of connections provided by their religious organizations.⁷⁹

Educational efforts have been noted by Erik van Ommering as being one of the new battlefields of warfare by non-state actors.⁸⁰ Schools provide both children and adults a sense of normalcy that anchors them in their communities. However the ethnic tensions that are found in broader Lebanese society also found their way into the schools, with children as young as six becoming aware of the sectarian divisions in their schools.⁸¹ To reduce conflict amongst older students several principals imposed bans on the discussion of politics and religion and instead made efforts to focus on the unity of Lebanon as a state.⁸² However these efforts have not prevented the students from expressing and constructing their views on matters of religion and politics, using magazines brought to school and adopting the colors of their sectarian groups. Lebanese children sought to identify themselves with their sectarian political organizations, despite efforts of principals to combat sectarianism.

Non-formal education has proven to be a way for NGOs to engage the public in topics of conflict prevention and other issues. Several NGOs have adopted unique methods for public communication. Nayla Naoufal's work examines the efforts of IndyACT an NGO focused on educating the public on the effects of climate change. She found that long term goals like climate change and peace building were harder to communicate to a public that had become accustomed to thinking of only short term survival needs.⁸³ To combat these challenges IndyACT has engaged in efforts to link climate change with sources of conflict in Lebanon, using both one-time events and ongoing education efforts. One such one-time event sought to dramatize the effects of rising sea levels. IndyACT placed a man inside a clear plastic cube on the sea shore and over the course of three days the cube was slowly filled with water, with only a small amount of food which he rationed over the three day event.⁸⁴ The event sought to demonstrate how rising sea levels would increase food shortages and displace communities.

South Sudan:

Conflict in South Sudan was heightened during and after becoming a state in 2011. The literature considered in this review consults United Nations operations before independence and local peacekeeping efforts.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *Peace Operations in Africa: Lessons Learned Since 2000* discussed the increasingly popular collaborative operations or "Partnership peacekeeping," that involves multilateral and bilateral actors and institutions. The Africa Center argues that peacekeeping efforts should not rely on the quantity of peacekeepers, but "focus on deploying the capabilities needed to realize mission objectives."⁸⁵ To be successful, these operations must include a political strategy aimed at conflict resolution (Williams 2000). The Africa Center concluded that successful peacekeeping missions obtained "legitimacy among international and local stakeholders."

Across South Sudan the "degree of peace experienced" ranges from sustainable peace (Northern and Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Central Equatoria) to small scale localized conflict (Western and Eastern Equatoria) to violent conflict (in the center and northeast portion of the state).⁸⁶ The *Peace and Conflict Assessment of South Sudan 2012* created by - International Alert names five institutional factors that can encourage peacebuilding in this region: predictable governance, security infrastructure, local leadership infrastructure, religious leadership and international presence (Reeve 2012). International Alert proposes a multifaceted plan for peace building that includes numerous strategies for each sector including peace conferences to reconcile and deter future violence, disarmament and capacity building. International Alert has promoted a "conflict-sensitive approach," referring to the importance of understanding the "interaction between activities and the context." They are careful to take into consideration how their peacebuilding activities will influence the environment in which the conflict is occurring.

Last year the Center for Conflict Resolution - Peacebuilding in Africa held a four-day training workshop “on conflict management, reconciliation, negotiation, and mediation skills.” This workshop was for local human rights and peacebuilding non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in South Sudan. The main goals were to build the NGOs peacebuilding and reconciliation skills; to explore the specific challenges current actors face when peacebuilding in communities; and to equip the organizations with skills to manage conflicts in South Sudan effectively. There has been some qualitative research regarding the role of women in peacebuilding and the impact natural resources has on conflict. Long-term statistics are scarce because many programs were initiated after independence in 2011.

Douglas H. Johnson, a scholar on South Sudan, has argued that South Sudan is not experienced in peacemaking and needs to approach it on several levels. He discusses three negotiations relevant to South Sudan’s history: the 1972 negotiations that led to the Addis Ababa Agreement on self-government, the 1999 Wunlit people-to-people peace conference which sought reconciliation between the Dinka and Nuer people, and the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which paved the way to South Sudan’s eventual independence (Johnson 2014). Johnson explains that a “real people-to-people process”⁸⁷ is necessary to address the traumatized population and establish transitional justice. He acknowledges that his ideas are theoretical because there ongoing violence.

Exemplifying the United Nations call for an increase in civilian peacekeeping efforts, the international NGO, NonViolent PeaceForce (NP), has practiced its own model of unarmed civilian peacekeeping since 2002. Unarmed civilian protection provides reinforcement to communities threatened by violence in contexts where “armed intervention would be counterproductive, unsuitable or an overreaction.” In numerous situations, the presence of the unarmed civilian protection force has deterred aggressors from violence against protected communities. NP’s peacekeepers live and work within the communities that they protect, they help create a stable environment, which fosters safety for civilians, and they support peaceful diplomatic dialogue between warring parties. NP’s peacekeeping forces are especially beneficial to South Sudan because of their ability “to react flexibly to developing situations,” and respond to conflict with a contextual knowledge.⁸⁸

Appendix B:

Key Expert Table

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Expert Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Position</i>
Central African Republic	4/20/2016	Thomas Paul Banze	Search for Common Ground	Country Director - CAR
Democratic Republic of Congo	04/12/2016 05/08/2016	George Bani Bibenga	Initiatives pour la Réconciliation Communautaire (INIREC)	Initiatives Coordinator for Community Reconciliation
Guatemala	5/8/2016	Claudia Samayoa	UDEFEGUA	Director
Guatemala	4/18/2016	Dr. Ann Frisch	Nonviolent Peaceforce	Senior Advisor and Unarmed Civilian Protector
Lebanon	04/06/2016	Fouad Saad	Fighters for Peace	Founder
Lebanon	4/16/2016	Morgane Ortman	Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace	DM&E Coordinator
South Sudan		Chris Holt	NonViolent PeaceForce	Deputy Country Director (Programme and Advocacy)

Appendix C:

Conflict Typology Matrix

Countries	Type of Conflict (Elite, Factional, Communal/Mass, Revolutionary, Foreign Intervention)	Examples of Conflict Resolution Approaches (Methods)	Result of Resolution/Current Situation
Burundi	Communal – (Ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis)	Nonprofit and civil society organizations: Association of Girl Guides of Burundi ¹ and Scout Association of Burundi ² provide youth with non-formal peace education. They use methods of recognizing one's own abilities and influence through active engagement.	Projects have strengthened youth to become positively engaged in the community. However, there are still overall tensions around elections, restrictions on media and political freedoms. Recently violence is escalating again between government and rebel forces ³
Central African Republic	Religious/sectarian violence (Muslim and Christian) Foreign Intervention (by France) Revolutionary (military coups)	Local-level interventions designed to reduce religious tensions and promote reconciliation: Search for Common Ground "Better Together" program includes group meetings, soccer matches and constructive radio journalism ⁴ Interfaith Secretariat leads workshops that address topics such as social cohesion and trauma healing ⁵	Strengthened capacity to resolve conflicts and promote more peaceful living among Muslims and Christians
Colombia	Revolutionary, FARC and ELN Guerillas and Drug Cartels, Elite, Right-wing Paramilitaries; currently in early post-conflict transition period, civilian population heavily impacted	Pressure from rival guerilla groups, government crackdown, and paramilitary assassinations have driven rebel groups to peace talks ⁶	Rebel groups (ELN and FARC) are in preliminary peace talks, paramilitary groups continue to assassinate and kidnap officials
Darfur	Elite conflict - government vs. rebel groups; government-backed militias caused ethnic cleansing/genocide and displacement	Community-based labor intensive projects (CLIPs) have taught vocational skills in Darfur through UNAMID's collaboration with local government, educational and NGO partners. CLIPs engage and empower youth who are at risk for becoming the victims or	By investing in job training in collaboration with local education and NGO efforts, UNAMID has successfully contributed to a more protective environment in Darfur. However, UNAMID has been ongoing since 2007, and

		perpetrators of community violence ⁷	long-term political solutions are still unlikely to be achieved in the near future ⁸
DRC	Communal and Mass	Local NGOs, local community-centered approach Community(timber companies and local communities),youth engagement, children and women protection/Education/health Human rights/democracy Ethnic protection Environment/climate change	e.g.The resolution approaches include the exclusion from harvesting of vital timber species to the local communities, implementation of sustainable forest management plans by timber companies, compensation for compliance with the management plan by the companies, ⁹ and community involvement in monitoring activities of timber companies ¹⁰
Guatemala	Communal, Elite	Peacekeepers, international presence helped to deescalate occurrences of conflict. disarmament campaigns, provide a means for indigenous rebels to turn in arms	Disarmament deescalated tensions between ethnic groups but hasn't contributed to resolving underlying social and economic problems. The ongoing poverty, poor educational opportunities, and gang activity have created an environment for transnational organized crime to thrive.
Lebanon	Factional, Communal	There has been a growth of many local NGOs with an emphasis on reaching across sectarian lines. Fighters for Peace uses public speaking events to engage youth, explaining why they picked up arms in the civil war and how they became trapped in the cycle of war. Farah Al Ataa focuses on youth workshops to share conflict prevention techniques and on community improvement. There has been growth of many local NGOs with an emphasis on reaching across sectarian lines.	There exists a delicate balance of power in Lebanon between its sectarian and confessional divisions, local NGO efforts have helped play a role in building some trust between communities. However with nearly 2 million Syrian refugees fleeing into Lebanon the situation is becoming more precarious.
Liberia	Elite (war crimes by president related to backing rebels in Sierra Leone)	Liberia's 'Conflict Early Warning Working Group' works to detect preliminary threats to peace and develop strategies to prevent violence ¹¹	Early warning groups have helped sustain Liberia's current relatively peaceful environment

	Factional (rebel groups fighting for control of territory)		
Sierra Leone	<p>Revolutionary (series of military coups; civil war)</p> <p>Foreign Intervention (British)</p>	Action for Rural Development Sierra Leone works towards conflict prevention and inclusion of marginalized groups through training community members and community dialogue ¹²	Actives have brought increased social cohesion and community participation
South Sudan	<p>Factional - between multiple government factions (rebel faction led by former vice president) and is ongoing despite peace agreement¹²</p> <p>Communal (ethnic): President Kiir is supported by Dinka tribes, Vice President Machar is supported by the Nuer tribe</p>	<p>International support through mediation with the governmental,</p> <p>Local consultation, education, nation building efforts lead by NGOs, peacebuilding workshops and leadership training sessions¹³</p>	<p>Vice President Riek Machar returned to Juba August 2016 (under threat of international sanctions) to form a new unity government.¹⁴</p> <p>Ethnic tensions remain along with rebel groups outside of the control of the President and Vice president. The CPA agreement between Sudan and South Sudan was not comprehensive and gaps in policy still remain.</p>
Syria	Elite - government vs. rebel groups and foreign power intervention	In Syria there exists too much violence for conflict resolution parties to safely work. However among Syrian refugee communities there are several efforts to prevent recruitment of fighters. Fighter for Peace based in Lebanon has begun efforts to try and train Syrian ex-fighters in methods of public speaking to prevent recruitment. The Medrar foundation provides basic living conditions for Syrian refugees and holds workshops to help build cooperation between Lebanese and Syrian communities.	Conflict continues to rage unabated

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