How the 116th Congress Can Build Peace & Reduce Global Violence

Congressional Briefing Book from the Alliance for Peacebuilding

February 2019
The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) is a nonpartisan network of 100+ organizations working in 153 countries to end conflict, reduce violence, and build sustainable peace. Our members include some of the world’s largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and most influential humanitarian and faith-based groups. We build coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.

Find the full document and each section at: allianceforpeacebuilding.org/116Congress.
Introducing the Alliance for Peacebuilding

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Policy & Advocacy

AfP leads the peacebuilding field to ensure conflict prevention, violence reduction, and peacebuilding learnings and findings correlate to better policy, programming, and legal frameworks. We work with the U.S. Congress and advocate for peacebuilding priorities; advise the U.S. Executive branch on peacebuilding and violence reduction policy; and build coalitions of technical experts through our global policy networks.

Learning & Evaluation

AfP is focused on changing the field of peacebuilding to embrace a more evaluative culture and harness the power of collective impact to deliver durable peace. We build capacity and empower peacebuilders to capture high quality, actionable data; encourage the field to become more evidence-based; and make a stronger case for peace through our research efforts to link action to impact.

Public Awareness & Networking

AfP aims to elevate the public and policy profile of peacebuilding and build robust professional networks across the peacebuilding field. AfP co-leads a coalition whose goal is to expand peacebuilding to a broader public movement; conducts an annual best-in-class global peacebuilding conference; connects diverse practitioners worldwide; and builds partnerships that drive innovation and advance solutions.

Working with Congress

AfP works with the U.S. Congress at every step of its legislative and oversight processes. We convene Working Groups on key topics, from Countering Violent Extremism to Electoral Violence. We offer briefings, recommend expert witnesses, and/or provide questions for hearings on topics ranging from regional conflicts and violent extremism, to conflict prevention and state fragility. We look forward to working closely with the 116th Congress.

Purpose of this Briefing Book

This Congressional briefing book outlines the priority recommendations and requests for the U.S. Congress from AfP’s member organizations. The policy proposals presented here are by no means exhaustive, but seek to outline pieces of legislation that our members believe would reduce global levels of violence and help to build sustainable peace.

If you are interested in working with AfP at any time, please contact:
Liz Hume, Vice President, 202.822.2047x223 or LHume@allianceforpeacebuilding.org.
### Top 10 Ways the 116th Congress Can Build Peace

#### Key Global Crises

1. End the civil war in Yemen.
2. Address the root causes of violence in Central America.
3. Reintroduce and pass the **Palestinian Partnership Fund Act**.

#### Foreign Policy Priorities

4. Reintroduce and pass the **Global Fragility & Violence Reduction Act**, with authorized funding appropriated for implementation.
5. Remove legal barriers to peacebuilding by **reforming U.S. material support laws**.
6. Authorize and appropriately fund the proposed **USAID Conflict Prevention and Stabilization Bureau**.

#### State & Foreign Operations Appropriations

7. Maintain full funding for the State Department and USAID, especially peacebuilding accounts.
8. Appropriate new funding for Unarmed Civilian Protection.

#### Domestic Policy Priorities

10. Reintroduce and pass the **Public Health Violence Prevention Act**.

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*AFP’s members are constantly engaging with Congress on new crises, policy priorities, and ideas. This top 10 list is not exhaustive, but reflects our primary priorities.*

Visit [allianceforpeacebuilding.org/116Congress](http://allianceforpeacebuilding.org/116Congress) for additional information and ways to connect with AfP.
Doubling Down to End Priority Global Crises

End the Civil War in Yemen

The war in Yemen has caused a humanitarian disaster, with over 22 million people requiring some form of humanitarian aid. More than 3 million people have been displaced, and over 7,000 civilians have been killed in the fighting, with tens of thousands more dying of starvation and disease.

The conflict in Yemen has captured the attention of the international community and the U.S. Congress, generating positive momentum toward addressing the crisis and restarting peace negotiations. AfP supports all legislative vehicles that support the UN-led peace process, address the growing humanitarian crisis, end violations of international humanitarian law, and facilitate a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The bipartisan Saudi Arabia Accountability and Yemen Act, introduced in 2018 as S. 3652, is one such resolution that takes a comprehensive approach to do just that - ending U.S. military involvement, ensuring accountability, addressing the humanitarian crisis, and encouraging an end to the conflict. We believe this bill, and others like it, are important legislative vehicles to enforce and extract positive outcomes in Yemen. Additionally, AfP calls on the United States and other international donors to increase funding for the “peacebuilding and conflict resolution” sub-sector in the 2019 UN Humanitarian Appeal for Yemen.

Address Root Causes of Violence in Central America

High levels of violence in Central America, including the Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, have driven vulnerable civilians from those countries to seek safety in the United States. The Trump Administration has proposed cutting foreign aid to Central American countries as part of its immigration policy. Cutting foreign aid to countries where asylum seekers come from, in order to curb migration, would have the opposite effect. To address these sources of violence, Congress should increase foreign assistance to Central American countries focused on addressing the root causes of violence and forced displacement.

Central American governments are not “sending” their citizens to the United States, but rather people are being forced to flee due to increasing levels of insecurity, poverty, and violent conflict. Cuts to foreign aid will increase the number of asylum seekers arriving at our borders.
Pass the Palestinian Partnership Fund Act

Congress should **reintroduce and pass the Palestinian Partnership Fund Act**. Introduced in 2018 as H.R. 7060 & S. 3549, the Palestinian Partnership Fund Act aims at building the on-the-ground conditions necessary to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians from the bottom-up. This bipartisan legislation builds on the earmarking of $50 million for such a fund in the Fiscal Year 2019 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

The Fund recognizes building peace requires a unified effort to change both economic conditions and people’s attitudes toward one other. The Fund focuses not just on economic growth for Palestinians alone, but also on their sustainable economic integration with Israelis. It aims not only to build businesses, but also to tackle the incitement and dehumanization that have afflicted youth in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Fund would be compliant with all current congressional legislation, including the Taylor Force Act.
Foreign Policy Authorizing Priorities

Global Fragility & Violence Reduction Act (GFVRA)

Congress should reintroduce and pass an improved Global Fragility & Violence Reduction Act (GFVRA), with authorized funding appropriated for implementation.

Introduced in 2018 as H.R. 5273 & S. 3368, the GFVRA would require the U.S. Department of State, in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of Defense, and other federal agencies, to develop a new strategy to reduce and prevent violent conflict. The GFVRA would give the U.S. government the tools needed for a long-term, coordinated approach to identify and mitigate the drivers of violence.

Currently, U.S. policy and spending in fragile states are governed by a patchwork of authorities and appropriations accounts spanning several agencies with different mandates, equities, interests, tools, and capabilities on violent conflict. Neither U.S. Ambassadors nor USAID Mission Directors have the policy tools they need to effectively drive U.S. assistance toward a long-term, overarching strategy with the end goal of reduced violence or improved stability.

The United States invests heavily in diplomatic, development, and defense resources to respond to and contain violence, but not there is not enough focus on efforts to prevent and address the drivers of global fragility and conflict or to measure results. The GFVRA aims to solve this strategic imbalance by strengthening U.S. government capacity to identify the root causes of fragility and violent conflict and then developing effective policy and programmatic interventions.

If passed, the legislation would:

- Require the administration to launch a “Global Initiative to Reduce Fragility and Violence,” guiding U.S. government efforts to bring down current levels of violence and improve its efforts to prevent future violent conflicts;
- Require the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, to select countries or regions where the United States will pursue new investments and programming to achieve the Global Initiative;
- Improve the administration’s ability to measure, evaluate, and assess efforts to reduce violence and prevent violent conflict; and
- Provide funding for the Initiative.

A version of the bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 376-16 in November 2018. A new version is expected to be re-introduced in early 2019. A broad coalition of over 50 leading international humanitarian, peacebuilding, development, and faith-based organizations endorse the GFVRA.

Visit allianceforpeacebuilding.org/violencereductionbill for more information.
Remove Legal Barriers to Peacebuilding: Material Support

Congress can remove legal barriers to peacebuilding by reforming material support laws. This change would provide badly needed legal clarity to nonprofit organizations working to prevent terrorism and build peace. U.S. law prohibits providing “material support” to foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). The definition of material support of terrorism was last updated in 2004 with the passage of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. Clarity is needed because this definition has not kept pace with evolving methodologies and counterterrorism strategies. Relevant programs include those designed to turn people away from terrorism; demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) of fighters; as well as programs that support democracy building and nonviolent conflict resolution skills.

Innovative programs are often constrained by concerns about the material support definition, making them less effective than they could be. For example, the FARC in Colombia remains on the Foreign Terrorist Organization list, although it is demobilizing pursuant to a peace agreement. This effectively bars U.S. peacebuilding organizations from lending their considerable expertise to the process. Additionally, in arguments before the Supreme Court in the 2010 Humanitarian Law Project case, then-Solicitor General Elena Kagan made it clear that not all engagement with FTOs is prohibited, giving examples of permissible activities. Congress can unleash the potential of peacebuilding and DDR programs by clarifying what is covered and what is not.

USAID Bureau of Conflict Prevention & Stabilization

Transformation at USAID is an ongoing initiative that will restructure the agency, partly through the proposed creation of a Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS). USAID intends for CPS to, “strengthen USAID’s capacity to prevent conflict, address fragility, respond to global crises in a more strategic, integrated way, and act as a stabilizing force in times of transition.” USAID submitted Congressional Notifications on each of the major areas of change in Fall 2018. Congress should approve the plans, authorize the new CPS Bureau, and appropriately fund its efforts.

The proposed new Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization will focus on prevention, which is a welcome shift toward addressing violent conflict further upstream. The Bureau will also provide opportunities to improve U.S. efforts to monitor and measure conflict prevention. Other elements of the transformation will elevate conflict prevention by clarifying USAID’s role in national security and reforming procurement to work more nimbly in non-permissive environments.
SFOPS Appropriations Priorities

Maintain Full Funding for State Department and USAID

Congress should maintain full funding for the State Department and USAID, especially key peacebuilding accounts. In recent years, foreign assistance funding has been a target for proposed cuts and even rescissions. Congress has rightly rejected most cuts to foreign assistance, including peacebuilding funds. Our members are most grateful to Congress for their support and urge continued leadership in the 116th Congress.

Within the federal budget, five accounts support critical U.S. government peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities and should be fully funded in Fiscal Year 2020:

**Complex Crises Fund (CCF):** CCF is used by the State Department and USAID to prevent and respond to emerging or unforeseen crises. CCF is a tool for civilians within the U.S. Government to focus on countries or regions that demonstrate a high or escalating risk of conflict, instability, or unanticipated opportunity for progress in fragile democracies. CCF provides global, flexible funding.

**Conflict and Stabilization Operations:** The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) is the only Department of State bureau dedicated to conflict prevention. CSO is home to analysis, planning, specialized diplomatic expertise and frontline surge capacity that is unique within the Department and the interagency. CSO works closely with longstanding partners including the Department of Defense and USAID.

**Reconciliation Programs:** The Reconciliation Programs Fund supports “people-to-people” conflict mitigation and reconciliation programs. These programs bring together individuals of different ethnic, religious, class, or political backgrounds from areas of civil conflict and war and have them interact meaningfully. USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) manages the funds.

**Transition Initiatives:** This fund supports USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). The Office addresses opportunities and challenges in countries in crisis and assists in their transition to promote stability, peace, good governance, and democracy.

**United States Institute of Peace:** The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) is an independent, nonpartisan institution charged with increasing the nation’s capacity to prevent, mitigate, and help resolve international conflict without violence.

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New Appropriations: Unarmed Civilian Protection

We recommend Congress specifically include recognition of, and financial support for, Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) in the FY2020 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill.

Unarmed civilian protection is a strategy for the protection of civilians, localized violence reduction, and supporting local peace infrastructures, in which unarmed, trained civilians live and work with local civil society in areas of violent conflict. The need for UCP is rising. In the 20th century, most fatalities in war were soldiers; in the 21st century, the majority of fatalities have been civilians. The global scale of violence and migration will only exacerbate this trend. UCP is nonviolent, nonpartisan, and contingent on local actors.

The High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations recommended that unarmed approaches must be at the forefront of United Nations efforts to protect civilians, including children.

New Appropriations: Women, Peace & Security

To implement the forthcoming Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Strategy mandated in the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, civil society encourages Congress to consider new appropriations for WPS activities. We recommend no less than $21,000,000 be made available over three years to support the WPS strategy. This funding will expand and improve coordination of U.S. Government efforts to empower women as equal partners in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, transitional processes, relief and reconstruction efforts in countries affected by violent conflict or in political transition. It will ensure the equitable provision of relief and recovery assistance to women and girls. This should consist of:

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<td>$3,000,000 a year for 3 years</td>
<td>For 12 gender advisors to bolster WPS efforts full time in the six geographic combatant commands, Special Operations Command, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Cyber Command, Transportation Command, and Strategic Command.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$3,000,000 a year for 3 years</td>
<td>To support building partner capacity (BPC) training on WPS at the six geographic combatant commands.</td>
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<td>$500,000 over 3 years</td>
<td>To conduct operational gender advisor training courses each year in at least three combatant commands.</td>
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<td>$500,000 over 3 years</td>
<td>To support research and education on the impact of WPS principles on the effectiveness of security-related policies and programs.</td>
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<td>$500,000 a year for 3 years</td>
<td>To conduct training courses on issues and strategies to ensure meaningful participation by women in conflict prevention and resolution, protecting civilians from violence, and awareness building on international human rights law for Department of State and USAID personnel responsible for or deploying to conflict-affected areas.</td>
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<td>$500,000 over 3 years</td>
<td>To support research and establish guidelines for consultation with stakeholders, including local women, youth, ethnic, and religious minorities, regarding U.S. efforts to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.</td>
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<td>$21,000,000</td>
<td>to support the Women, Peace, and Security Strategy</td>
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Domestic Authorizing Priorities

Public Health Violence Prevention Act

Early in the 116th Congress, AfP anticipates reintroduction of an updated version of the Public Health Violence Prevention Act. We urge Congress to support this landmark legislation that would establish a National Center for Violence Prevention in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that would develop and drive forward a comprehensive, preventive program to reduce and prevent violence across the United States.

On a typical day in the United States, 39 Americans are murdered. 180 are shot and wounded. 1,900 children are abused. 27,400 women and men are physically abused by an intimate partner. 117 individuals commit suicide. Violence in the United States has become a public health crisis. Just like lead poisoning, seasonal influenza, or Zika, violence can be reduced and prevented using a combined public health and peacebuilding approach.

Based on evaluations of local and national level initiatives, it is estimated that a minimum of 30% of violent incidents of all forms can be prevented with sustained reductions should communities include a multi-sector health approach. With an estimated annual expense of $450 billion related to violence, this $1 billion investment will yield a savings of approximately $135 billion and 18,000 lives.

Health and Human Services has led multiple violence prevention efforts through the Office of Minority Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency, and others. However, the funding has not been commensurate with the need to respond and prevent all forms of violence. The funding has also been significantly less than the expenditures related to the impact of violence (hospitalizations, trauma, loss of productivity, prisons, etc.). Evidence-informed systems change has proven effective in reducing violence of all forms nation-wide in small sections of communities.

The Public Health Violence Prevention Act established a Public Health Violence Prevention Program (PHVP) that will develop and oversee a comprehensive set of grants focused on reducing and preventing violence where it is needed most in the United States. Grant awards shall also give preference to projects in the top 50 – the U.S. cities and counties, including rural and frontier areas, with the highest rates of violence per capita as well as those with the highest spikes in all forms of violence over a period of time.

This bill would allow the implementation of a comprehensive multi-sector health approach to violence to be brought to scale. Nonprofits (including nonprofit hospitals) universities, and government entities (with specific emphasis on health departments) are well-positioned to lead this effort to establish protocols, policies, and programs while ensuring quality results that are both life and cost saving.
The State of Global Violence

Violent conflict is one of the primary causes of the most pressing foreign policy issues, from terrorism to mass migration to humanitarian needs. The world is experiencing a **30-year high** in violence and violent conflict. Battle deaths have **risen 340 percent** globally in the past 10 years. Indeed, there were **10 times** as many battle-related deaths in 2016 as 2005. The United Nations has recorded **402 active violent conflicts**, a major uptick from past years.

Violent conflicts and war have triggered the **worst displacement and refugee crisis** ever recorded, displacing **68.5 million people**. Just ten years ago, approximately 80% of humanitarian aid went to helping the victims of natural disasters, but today that ratio is **reversed**, with 80% of aid going to meet the needs of victims of violent conflict.

Violent conflicts **fuel terrorism** and create conditions for ISIS, ISIS affiliates, and other foreign terrorist organizations to recruit and thrive. **Over 99%** of all deaths caused by terrorism have occurred in countries involved in violent conflict or with high levels of political terror.

Furthermore, **violence is expensive**:

![Economic Impact of Violence](image)

**Peacebuilding needs the support of the 116th Congress.** This Congressional session will be a critical timeframe for the United States to recalibrate its approach to global conflict. The needs are clearly immense, not only to mitigate and stabilize environments currently experiencing violent conflict, but also to prevent those on the brink of crisis.
Conflict-Affected and Fragile States

U.S.-supported peacebuilding programs are implemented in conflict-affected, violent, and fragile states. Fragility, conflict, and violence are each distinct but intertwined in many of the world’s hotspots.

Countries that experience extremely high levels of violence, but are not necessarily considered in active conflict, should still be of high concern for the U.S. government. The countries that rank highest for rates of violent death include El Salvador, Venezuela, and Honduras. They suffer from high political and social instability and gang violence, even though they are not considered conflict zones like Afghanistan and Syria. Violence in these areas also underlies U.S. domestic and national security issues including gangs and narcotrafficking. The United States should take a global approach to reduce all forms of violence.

Generally, “fragility” refers to a country’s vulnerability to and inability to recover from shocks such as humanitarian and environmental crises, violent conflict, or economic downturn. Roughly 1.4 billion people live in states deemed as fragile.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming are critical to ensure a fragile state does not become a full-blown violent conflict. War can act as development in reverse, destroying lives and redirecting scarce resources.

Fragility has many definitions, including:

“The extent to which state-society relations fail to produce outcomes that are considered to be effective and legitimate.” USAID

“The absence or breakdown of a social contract between people and their government. Fragile states suffer from deficits of institutional capacity and political legitimacy that increase the risk of instability and violent conflict and sap the state of its resilience to disruptive shocks.” Fragility Study Group

Resources: State Fragility

- Fragile State Index Annual Report 2018
- OECD States of Fragility Report 2018
- World Bank FY19 List of Fragile Situations
- The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States
- USAID Fragile States Strategy Report 2005
- Fragility Study Group- U. S. Leadership and the Challenge of State Fragility
About Peacebuilding

**Peacebuilding is defined as:**

“A broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of a lasting and sustainable peace.”

To achieve the “promotion of a lasting and sustainable peace,” peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of efforts, from official peace processes to informal community dialogues. Across the world, millions of peacebuilders work day in and day out to manage, mitigate, and prevent violent conflict. Peacebuilding can take place before, during, and after violent conflict occurs.

The peacebuilding community partners with and is funded by the U.S. government, among others. This partnership is a critical element of U.S. foreign policy that protects national interests at home and abroad, and recognizes that government alone cannot solve the world’s problems. These programs are also funded by other governments, as well as private foundations and donors.

**Peacebuilding programs attempt to directly address the causes of violence.** USAID has identified patterns that commonly give rise to grievances in fragile and conflict-affected states: elitism, exclusion, chronic capacity deficits, transitional moments, and the exacerbating factor of corruption. Examples of these patterns include instability from deteriorating economies, weak or illegitimate political institutions, discrimination and marginalization, and competition over natural resources.

Examples of successful U.S.-supported peacebuilding programs include:

- In **Egypt**, influential Muslims and Christians collaborated to promote tolerance and resolve conflict without violence.
- In **Kenya and Somalia**, livelihood training and job placement, combined with messaging to youth, reduced drivers of violent extremism.
- In rural **Guatemala**, land mediation reduced hostilities between wealthy landowners and indigenous farming communities, which improved trust and reduced community violence.

When peacebuilding elements are added to other interventions, like economic development, education, and health programs, these programs are not only more effective themselves, but they help create more sustainable peace on the ground. Peacebuilding interventions rely on the principles of **Conflict Sensitivity and Do No Harm**, which should apply to all development programs.

*Note: Peacekeeping, by contrast, usually refers to specific efforts of an external military force to maintain security.*
Public Support for Peacebuilding

Several recent polls show that Americans have widespread support for peacebuilding and understand the nuanced approach that peacebuilding requires. Across geography, age, race, politics, and gender, **Americans agree: Congress should invest more in peace.**

**Key Findings**

1 percent or less of the federal budget is spent on foreign aid each year.

Americans serially overestimate the amount of money spent abroad. In one study, after learning how little is spent on foreign aid, 50 percent of respondents who had classified foreign aid as “too much” flipped their position.

$1,885 is spent on military budgets globally for every $1 spent on peacebuilding.

Military leaders understand that engagement costs more than prevention. In 2017, over 120 three- and four-star generals signed a letter reiterating the need for civilian spending.

85% of Democrats and 72% of Republicans agree that, “Peacebuilding plays a vital role in ending violent conflicts...in the United States, we should be investing more resources in this.”

The support is consistently high across age groups, gender, and geography. In a 2012 survey, 78% of American participants believed the United States should also participate in UN peacekeeping efforts. When asked about funding priorities, respondents in the Peace Perceptions Poll listed “deal with reasons people fight in the first place” as most important.

67% of Americans defined peacebuilding as: “the long-term process of rebuilding relationships, changing attitudes, and establishing fairer institutions.”

Americans understand that peacebuilding is multifaceted and takes a sustained commitment to be successful.

**Resources: Public Opinion**

- The Peace Perceptions Poll, 2018 (International Alert, the British Council, and Riwi)
- Public Support for Peacebuilding, 2017 (AfP and Conciliation Resources)
- U.S. Public Opinion on Addressing State Fragility, 2018 (The Center for New American Security)
- Public Opinion on Global Issues, 2012 (Council on Foreign Relations)
Evidence of What Works

Since “peacebuilding” was coined in 1975, it has developed into a robust field with proven approaches, programs, and case studies. Peacebuilding is implemented in complex, fragile, and conflict-affected regions, where the drivers of violence, poverty, inequality, human rights abuses, and weak institutions are intricately linked. Therefore, peacebuilding programs can be more complicated to measure and evaluate than agriculture or health programs. Conflict is not linear, so programs must also be adaptive.

Despite these challenges, the peacebuilding community has made significant strides in designing, monitoring, and evaluating its programs. The field is developing evidence about what works, how to measure results, and whether programs are having the desired impact. Congress can provide oversight to ensure foreign assistance is implemented effectively by encouraging USAID to adopt standards, holding hearings, and passing relevant legislation.

Building peace can be difficult to prove, so the lens of reducing violence is useful to compare current and past results. While each program must be context-specific, there is some evidence on what works to reduce violence and build peace generally. Many types of peacebuilding programs can be effective, whether they target individuals at risk of committing violence, manage interactions between members of distinct groups, or improve local governance. Generally, evidence indicates that programs will be most successful when they take a comprehensive approach that utilizes a wide variety of tools and programming.

Programs that seek to provide at-risk individuals with alternatives, through vocational training, educational support, or counseling, can work to reduce community violence if complemented by a means to achieve the peaceful alternative. In Somalia, the Somali Youth Learners Initiative has addressed youth grievances by giving them both the skills and the mechanisms to make change in their communities and resist recruitment into Al-Shabaab. Improved access and quality of secondary education were not enough to prevent youth from perpetrating political violence, but when combined with civic engagement activities, youth showed much better results.

Good governance can also be related to peacebuilding. Programs that seek to improve how a local government meets its citizens’ needs can reduce community violence, but it matters if citizens perceive the government to be legitimate and responsive to their needs. These examples illustrate that proving violence reduction is complicated, but possible.

Resources: What Works

- Snapshot of Adaptive Management in Peacebuilding Programs (2018)
- Peacebuilding Approaches to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Assessing the Evidence for Key Theories of Change (2018)
### Alliance for Peacebuilding Members

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<th>Alliance for Peacebuilding Members</th>
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<td>Communities in Transition (CIT)</td>
<td>Pax Christi International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus Building Institute (CBI)</td>
<td>Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation International (CI)</td>
<td>Peace Appeal Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Associates International</td>
<td>Peace Catalyst International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity for Peace</td>
<td>Peace Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cure Violence</td>
<td>Peace Initiative Network (PIN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlham College</td>
<td>Peace News Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Law Institute (ELI)</td>
<td>Peace, Justice and Human Rights Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Access International</td>
<td>Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration, Syracuse University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHI 360</td>
<td>Program on Negotiation, Harvard Law School (PON)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)</td>
<td>Purdue Peace Project (PPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier Design Group</td>
<td>Quaker United Nations Office, New York (QUNO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHR Foundation</td>
<td>Rotary Peace Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict</td>
<td>Safeworlkd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Peace Building Foundation (GPBF)</td>
<td>Salam Institute for Peace and Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Programs in Coexistence and Conflict, Brandeis University</td>
<td>School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green String Network</td>
<td>School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)</td>
<td>Search for Common Ground (SFCG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT)</td>
<td>Shift Network, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD)</td>
<td>SIL International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for State Effectiveness (ISE)</td>
<td>Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of World Affairs (IWA)</td>
<td>TheContactProject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterAction</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts-Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Alert</td>
<td>War Prevention Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Association of Process Oriented Psychology</td>
<td>Women in International Security (WIIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VWorldwork Committee</td>
<td>World Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Center for Religion &amp; Diplomacy (ICRD)</td>
<td>World Learning, SIT Graduate Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC)</td>
<td>World Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Civil Society Action Network</td>
<td>Young Peacebuilders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexes

Violent conflict is related to, and even at the root of, many foreign policy and national security issues. The 116th Congress can support peacebuilding and violence reduction directly, while also improving coordination with other efforts.

To learn more, explore AfP’s Connections briefs that outline background information, recent US government efforts, new opportunities, and resources.

Annex I: The U.S. Government and Peacebuilding
Annex II: Definitions and Key Terms
Annex III: Violent Conflict & Terrorism
Annex IV: Violent Conflict & Development
Annex V: Violent Conflict & Humanitarian Assistance
Annex VI: Violent Conflict & Gender
Annex VII: Violent Conflict & Refugees
Annex I: The U.S. Government and Peacebuilding

The peacebuilding community works closely with several elements of the U.S. government.

**Congress**

Six key Congressional committees and subcommittees shape policy on peacebuilding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorizing</th>
<th>Appropriating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Foreign Affairs Committee</td>
<td>Senate Foreign Relations Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Armed Services Committee</td>
<td>Senate Armed Services Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee</td>
<td>Senate State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance** and **Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission** also play significant roles.

**Executive Branch**

Peacebuilding and conflict issues may be covered across all foreign policy agencies within the Executive Branch. Those who most often work with the peacebuilding community include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Department</th>
<th>State Department</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Agency for International Development</td>
<td>Current: Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forthcoming: Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Stabilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
<td>Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD-P)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accounts**

Within the federal budget, at least five accounts support specific peacebuilding activities:

- Complex Crises Fund
- Transition Initiatives
- Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- United States Institute of Peace
- Reconciliation Programs
## Annex II: Definitions and Key Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asylum-Seeker</strong></td>
<td>an individual that has been forced to flee their own country for the safety of another but has yet to receive any legal recognition or status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countering Violent Extremism</strong></td>
<td>proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence; intended to address the conditions and reduce the factors that most likely contribute to recruitment and radicalization by violent extremists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)</strong></td>
<td>the complex process to help ex-combatants transition, recover, and develop in the post-conflict society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fragility</strong></td>
<td>the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system, and/or communities to manage, absorb, or mitigate those risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Mainstreaming</strong></td>
<td>efforts to address and incorporate gender into all levels of planned policy actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanitarian Assistance</strong></td>
<td>the actions of governments and NGOs to alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity in the face of disasters and human crises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internally Displaced Person (IDP)</strong></td>
<td>someone who is forced to flee their home but has not sought shelter across any international borders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrant</strong></td>
<td>an individual that has chosen to leave their home but not strictly on the basis of threat or persecution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peacebuilding</strong></td>
<td>a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current, or post-conflict situations, and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of a lasting and sustainable peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R2P, or “Right to Protect”</strong></td>
<td>the UN Principle wherein states have the responsibility to protect the people within other states when their state has failed or refuses to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugee</strong></td>
<td>an individual that has received legal status as a migrant who has been forced to flee their home country due to persecution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stateless Person</strong></td>
<td>an individual that is not a citizen of any country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violent Extremism</strong></td>
<td>actions advocating, engaging in, or supporting violence to further ideologically motivated social, economic, or political objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radicalization</strong></td>
<td>the process by which individuals may become violent extremists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex III: Violent Conflict & Terrorism

Terrorism has commanded media and policy attention in recent decades. Americans cite terrorism as the type of violence that concerns them most. The terror attacks on September 11th, 2001, shifted U.S. foreign policy and spurred U.S. military involvement across South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Nearly two decades later, the United States has spent close to $6 trillion waging the War on Terror with no clear end in sight.

This heavy investment in militarized counter-terrorism (CT) efforts has failed to contain the threat. A comprehensive approach that addresses fundamental social and political drivers of extremism must be an integral part of any strategy to reduce and prevent terrorism. Violent conflict is at the root of terrorism. Over 99% of all deaths caused by terrorism have occurred in countries involved in violent conflict or with high levels of political terror. To reduce the global threat of terrorism, policymakers must develop a comprehensive approach to preventing conflict.

What Drives Terrorism

Terrorism is more than a military and intelligence issue alone. To get at the root causes of terrorism, officials and practitioners have developed the “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)” agenda, which encompasses development and diplomacy efforts.

Early CVE development programs were aimed at addressing economic factors on the assumption that providing more jobs would reduce extremism. In fact, research has shown that the primary motivating factors of violent extremism are not economic. Generally, social and political factors are more powerful than economic ones.

According to USAID and civil society, key driving factors include perceptions of marginalization and injustice, existential identity, a history of discrimination, feelings of isolation and oppression, lack of governance and state legitimacy, and a desire to right the wrongs one sees in the world. There is no clear profile of a violent extremist, even within specific movements, but some combination of these factors often applies.

Violent extremism is not specific to any one religion or nationality. Ideologies can play a role, but the drivers are more complex. Framing violent extremism as “radical Islam,” or similar terms, flies in the face of research. Singling out Islamic extremism feeds into the propaganda of Islamic extremist groups, removes focus from the immense risk of other types of violent extremism, and weakens essential partnerships with community groups and international organizations who will refuse to implement programs under such terms.

Key Terms

- Violent Extremism - actions advocating, engaging in, or supporting violence to further ideologically motivated social, economic, or political objectives.
- Radicalization - the process by which individuals may become violent extremists.
- Countering Violent Extremism - proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence; intended to address the conditions and reduce the factors that most likely contribute to recruitment and radicalization by violent extremists.
Challenges to Preventing Terrorism

Even with a greater understanding of what drives violent extremism, development practitioners face numerous challenges in implementing effective CVE programs. Poorly designed interventions can violate human rights, which only increases the grievances of those at risk for radicalization. Without respect for human rights, counter-terrorism policies are counterproductive. There is also concern among international development practitioners that CVE programs, especially those branded as such, may even put their beneficiaries in danger. Furthermore, the law threatens fines or imprisonment for anyone who provides “material support” to a known Foreign Terrorist Organization, without defining what constitutes support (18 USC. §2339A and §2339B).

Recent Efforts


President Obama also held a 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, which resulted in a post-Summit 9-Point Action Agenda. This meeting solidified the use of CVE terms.

The FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act mandated that the administration draft a comprehensive, interagency CVE strategy by June 2018. Instead, the administration produced and released a national CT strategy in October 2018 and claimed that this strategy was sufficient.

Opportunities

The Task Force on Extremism in Fragile States has a Congressional mandate to explore the nexus of violent extremism and fragility. Hosted at the U.S. Institute of Peace and led by former Governor Thomas Kean and former Representative Lee Hamilton, the Task Force directs focus to preventing the root causes of violent extremism in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East. A final report is expected in February 2019.

The Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act may address violent extremism, among other drivers of violent conflict.

Resources: Violent Conflict & Terrorism

- Global Terrorism Index (Institute for Economics and Peace)
- CVE Digest (Alliance for Peacebuilding), including:
  - USG Publications/Statements
  - NGO Publications/Statements
  - Policy Analysis
Annex IV: Violent Conflict & Development

In recent decades, as donors have delivered billions of dollars of foreign assistance, global suffering has declined significantly. Extreme poverty is at an all-time low, communicable diseases are decreasing, and more girls are going to school. However, violence in fragile states threatens to reverse these trends. An economic approach, while powerful, is not enough.

Development alone will not address the underlying grievances that lead to violence. Once underway, violent conflict derails development by weakening governments, disrupting economies, and erasing previous gains. Durable development requires strategies for conflict prevention.

Generally, “international development” refers to efforts to improve long-term economic, health, or social outcomes through investment. In 2017, the United States spent $34.5 billion, or 0.8% of the overall budget, on foreign economic aid. The United States contributed 0.18% of GDP to development aid, compared to 0.7% by the United Kingdom and 0.66% by Germany. The U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of State manage the majority of U.S. development funds, but the Departments of Health and Human Services and Treasury also contribute.

Development investment occurs against a backdrop of violent conflict. Every year, wars reduce global GDP by two percentage points on average. To achieve USAID Administrator Green’s “journey to self-reliance,” the U.S. government must approach development through a conflict prevention lens. Durable investments require an understanding of the relationship between poverty and violence.

In some cases, poverty fuels violence. As USAID understands, violent conflict emerges from real or perceived grievances, whether identity-based exclusion, economic deprivation, or political oppression. Development aid can reduce and prevent violence by addressing many grievances. However, initiatives that focus on economic empowerment alone will not adequately address the intergroup dynamics that lead to violence. As the UN/World Bank Pathways to Peace report states, “Growth and poverty alleviation are crucial but alone will not suffice to sustain peace.”

Simultaneously, violence fuels poverty. Conflict disrupts economies, social ties, and governance. In order to succeed, development requires basic stability: safety, fair markets, and consistent supply chains. Violence obviates these conditions.

Violent conflict has special urgency for development policies today. Twenty years ago, 80% of humanitarian aid addressed natural disasters. Now, 80% of humanitarian aid addresses conflict. To build strong societies, development actors must address violence directly. The World Bank suggests that by 2030, 50% of the world’s extreme poor will live in areas currently affected by violent conflict.

The U.S. government has started reforming to better address this reality. Congress should continue to provide oversight to ensure U.S. assistance is targeted toward achieving both economic and stabilization goals.
Recent Efforts

**The Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR)** promotes a strategy for violent contexts that blends humanitarian aid, military tactics, and peacebuilding. The goal is to create the right context for development. The SAR sets USAID as the primary implementor of stabilization activities.

**Transformation at USAID** is an ongoing initiative that will restructure the agency, partly through the proposed creation of a Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization. The Prevention focus marks a shift from an earlier approach of conflict management and mitigation. Other Transformation efforts will elevate conflict prevention by clarifying USAID’s role in national security and reforming procurement to work more nimbly in non-permissive environments.

The forthcoming **USAID Policy Framework** is expected to outline how USAID is transforming international development to be better aligned with goals of reducing and preventing violent conflict.

Opportunities

Congress has been notified of relevant proposed changes in the **USAID Transformation** and will continue to play an oversight role.

**The Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act (GVFRA)** would improve development outcomes by strengthening stabilization and prevention efforts. GVFRA would require the government to develop a 10-year plan for addressing root causes of violence around the globe. This approach would enhance governance and create space for development.

Resources: Violent Conflict & Development

- **InterAction** is a DC-based association of development and humanitarian organizations
- “Foreign Aid Explorer,” USAID
- “Official Development Assistance (ODA),” OECD
- “Pathways to Peace,” The World Bank and United Nations
- “How Does the US Spend Its Foreign Aid?” Council on Foreign Relations
Annex V: Violent Conflict & Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian assistance commonly refers to the actions of governments and NGOs to alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity in the face of disasters and human crises. Examples include the drought in Somalia, the outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, and the ongoing Syria crisis, which includes an estimated 6 million refugees. In 2017, it was reported that an estimated 201 million people in 134 countries were in need of humanitarian assistance, with a record $27.3 billion allocated to such assistance.

Assistance may include the protection of civilians and victims of hostilities, and the provision of food, water, shelter, and health services for those affected by disasters to help bring stability, safety, and health back to their lives.

While many think of humanitarian assistance as limited to natural disasters or health risks, conflict is a significant catalyst for humanitarian assistance. Violent conflict puts civilians at risk and increases assistance needs in the form of protection during conflict, health care, and reintegration after conflict. Key trends indicate that the number of forcibly displaced people because of violent conflict has grown by over 50% in the last 10 years. Syria, a country facing devastating conflict, has ranked as the largest recipient of humanitarian assistance for five years in a row, indicating a strong relationship between conflict and humanitarian assistance.

Key principles guide the goals of humanitarian assistance, including:

Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, and Independence.

Effective humanitarian assistance must grapple with the role played by violent conflict. On principle, external humanitarian actors consider themselves neutral in hostilities and independent from political objectives. As crises are increasingly man-made, rather than natural disasters, the political causes of the crises challenge these values.

Peacebuilding work that addresses political, ideological, racial, and religious issues directly can complement neutral humanitarian assistance when implemented carefully. Further, international policy is better suited to meet the demands of fragile populations affected by violent conflict when humanitarian assistance is sequenced with long-term development goals.

Key Terms

- Humanitarian assistance - the actions of governments and NGOs to alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity in the face of disasters and human crises.
- R2P or “Right to Protect” – the UN Principle wherein states have the responsibility to protect the people within other states when their state has failed or refuses to do so.
The **USAID Transformation** includes a newly proposed **Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance** that will advance USAID’s goal of delivering international disaster aid to serve both national foreign policy objectives as well as those in need of assistance.

Due to the connection between food insecurity and violent conflict, it is important to note efforts such as the **U.S. Global Food Security Strategy**. Authorized by the Global Food Security Act and subsequent **Global Food Security Reauthorization Act**, the Strategy is an interagency initiative to strengthen markets in 12 countries and combat hunger by building community resilience, enhancing nutrition, and improving water and crop management.

**Opportunities**

The **Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act (GVFRA)** would improve the capacity of the United States to reduce and address the causes of violence, fragility, and instability in key countries. If passed, the candidate countries will likely include some that have been key targets for humanitarian assistance.

When U.S. military involvement in **Yemen** is ended, there will be immense humanitarian and recovery needs. The United States and other international donors should increase funding for the “peacebuilding and conflict resolution” sub-sector in the 2019 UN Humanitarian Appeal for Yemen.

**Resources: Violent Conflict & Humanitarian Assistance**

- [USAID Humanitarian Assistance Year in Review 2017](#)
- [FTS – ReliefWeb Financial Tracking Services](#)
- [GDACS - Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System](#)
- [ReliefWeb](#)
- [The Humanitarian Agenda at the Center for Strategic and International Studies](#)
Annex VI: Violent Conflict & Gender

While war has been long considered a masculine endeavor, women are in fact disproportionately affected by conflict. Women comprise 49% of refugees worldwide as a result of violent conflict and experience a maternal mortality rate that is 2.5 times higher in conflict and post-conflict settings. In conflict-affected countries such as Yemen, child marriage rates rose to 66% of girls in 2017, and at least 200,000 women have been sexually assaulted during the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These are just some of the unique challenges that women endure in the face of conflict.

At the same time, women are vital voices in ending wars and building peace within their countries and communities. Countries with more female legislators are less likely to go to war and relapse back into conflict, while peace agreements are more likely to succeed when women are at the negotiating table, as in peace processes in Liberia and elsewhere.

The landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) recognizes that women are equal partners in the prevention and mitigation of violent conflict.

The WPS framework includes four principles:

- Participation
- Protection
- Prevention
- Relief and Recovery

Substantial progress has occurred since the year 2000 adoption of UNSCR 1325 to integrate women in the peacemaking process, yet only 27% of peace agreements signed in 2017 contained gender-responsive provisions. More must be done to address the systemic and foundational sources of gender inequality that make violent conflict more likely. Policy programming and advocacy efforts can better serve women in conflict by addressing these injustices, putting gender equality at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts, and furthering progress toward gender parity and empowerment.

Gender and sexual minorities are also distinctively impacted by conflict and violence. LGBTI people are often the most violently persecuted groups in a community and experience high levels of gender-based violence. Violence by both private individuals and the state continues to violate the most basic human rights of LGBTI individuals and serves to further undermine progress for gender equality. U.S. policy that would weaken LGBTI rights adversely impacts women and girls, including efforts to silo gender efforts to address a narrow and incomplete set of women’s issues.

Congress must ensure that the State Department and USAID defend and strengthen commitments to gender equality policies, analysis, programs, and staffing. These agencies should be held accountable for ensuring that gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment are core to their missions. All policies and practice should reflect and build on best practices and a robust evidence base.
Recent Efforts

The **U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security** was developed in **2011** to build upon the goals for gender mainstreaming into policy, as described in the 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. The outlined efforts focused on women’s participation and perspectives in the development of inclusive security and diplomatic efforts.

The Review was updated in **2016** to reflect lessons learned and identify areas for new or renewed attention.

Opportunities

The **Women, Peace, and Security Act** emerged from the National Action Plan and was signed into law in **2017**. This legislation requires a U.S. strategy to grow women’s participation in peacebuilding efforts. Featuring widespread bipartisan support in Congress as well as support from civil society, this legislation aims to ensure collaboration across all government agencies toward meaningful inclusion of women at all levels of the peace process. The Act requires sustained attention to ensure the implementation of strategies. Recent bipartisan calls to action symbolize the ongoing efforts of support for this act.

The **Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act** will require the United States to develop an interagency strategy to reduce violence, including gender-based and sexual violence, in key countries.

Resources: Violent Conflict & Gender

- The **US Civil Society Working Group** is available for consultation.
- Women, Peace, And Security and U.S. Policy
- Alliance for Peacebuilding’s ‘Gender &’ Research Brief Series
- Facts and Figures on Conflict and Women
- USAID’s Women and Conflict Programming Toolkit
- ICRC’s Women and War Guidance Document
- Saferworld’s Gender Analysis of Conflict Toolkit
- USIP’s Gender-Inclusive Framework and Theory (GIFT) Guide
- The Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace, and Security
- Global Women, Peace, and Security Initiative
Annex VII: Violent Conflict & Refugees

The global migration crisis is one of the most pressing foreign policy issues. While many Americans recognize that the unprecedented level of refugees results from crises in particular countries, they may not realize that the vast majority of refugees are displaced by violence and conflict, rather than natural disasters. Refugees are defined as individuals forced to flee their home country in search of safety due to conflict or persecution on the basis of religion, race, nationality, or membership in certain political or social groups. The United Nation’s 1951 Refugee Convention established customary protection of these individuals.

In 2017, 68.5 million people internationally were forcibly displaced from their homes. This data includes 25.4 million refugees, 40 million internally displaced people, and 3.1 million asylum-seekers. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of people internally displaced by conflict and violence at least doubled.

Key Terms

- **Refugee** – an individual that has received legal status as a migrant who has been forced to flee their home country due to persecution.
- **Migrant** – an individual that has chosen to leave their home but not strictly on the basis of threat or persecution.
- **Asylum-Seeker** – an asylum-seeker is an individual that has been forced to flee their own country for the safety of another but has yet to receive any legal recognition or status.
- **Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs)** – an internally displaced person is someone who is forced to flee their home but has not sought shelter across any international borders.
- **Stateless Person** – an individual that is not a citizen of any country.

Country cases contributing to such displacement data include Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia, all nations plagued by instability and conflict. A reported 3.5 million individuals worldwide are considered stateless people — most notably from the Rohingya minority of Myanmar who have fled persecution and violence that began in 2017—but actual data could reach up to 12 million individuals. The United States has been active in many of these contexts, but efforts often focus on humanitarian response rather than violence prevention.

Increasingly, international bodies recognize that violent conflict drives forced migration, in turn generating more violence, human rights violations, gender-based violence, and persecution. Addressing conflict and instability abroad reduces the potential for forced migration, lowering security threats to the United States and neighboring countries while ensuring the stabilization of global economies and markets. Additionally, addressing the security and rights of refugees reduces recruitment into violent extremist groups. By aiding groups and individuals affected by conflict, refugee and migrant policy addresses the disastrous results of instability, persecution, and war.
Recent Efforts

Secretary of State Pompeo stated in a September 2018 address that the anticipated ceiling for resettled refugees in the United States would be up to 30,000 during FY 2019, a drop from the 45,000 cap in FY 2018. The refugee ceiling proposed for FY 2018 is the lowest since 1980, and the United States is expected to reach only half of this figure.

Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, offered this response to the termination of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for refugees from Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras.

In June 2018, The Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) reviewed the 2018-2019 PRM-UNHCR Framework for Cooperation, which focuses on UN humanitarian reform efforts as well as oversight, monitoring, communications, and reporting requirements between UNHCR and the United States, their single largest donor.

Opportunities

The Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act will require the United States to develop an interagency strategy to reduce violence. If passed, priority countries and regions will be selected according to criteria that will include levels of internal and external displacement.

Resources: Violent Conflict & Refugees

Several international organizations develop annual reports and statistics on migration.

- Alliance for Peacebuilding – Gender & Forced Migration
- OECD International Migration Outlook 2018
- IOM World Migration Report 2018
- UNHCR Population Statistics Database
- World Bank Report: Forcibly Displaced - Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts