



## IPI MEETING BRIEF

### **Conversations on Prevention for Sustaining Peace: The Restoration and Extension of State Authority in Peace Operations**

Although we are beginning to understand what peace is, we often focus on the problems of conflict rather than the solutions associated with peace. With this approach, conflict prevention is often viewed as a tool for managing short-term crises rather than for sustaining peace in the long term.

As part of an ongoing effort to unpack the conceptual and practical contours of prevention for sustaining peace, IPI organized the second in a series of monthly high-level conversations among member states and other key stakeholders on February 24, 2017. This conversation focused on how peace operations can better implement their mandates from the perspective of prevention and sustaining peace. This conversation focused on mandates relating to the restoration and extension of state authority. The conversation offered the following insights:

- Broad consensus at the UN that prevention should be the priority, reaffirmed by the new secretary-general, presents an **opportunity to reform and integrate** work across all three UN pillars. This requires translating principles into reality on the ground.
- A prevention-based approach to peace should uphold the primacy of politics and focus on **building trust between citizens and governments**. This relationship is key for giving legitimacy to state institutions beyond that arising from elections.
- Different elements of the UN system tend to work in a fragmented manner, with each defining “prevention” and “sustaining peace” based on its agenda or funding needs. The UN Secretariat should better integrate its analysis, generate more creative options, and promote collaboration between departments to **develop a unified approach based on a system-wide strategy**, particularly in post-conflict engagement.
- Member states should work with the secretary-general to **set coherent expectations** for the UN and other actors working on conflict prevention. Integrated reporting to the Security Council would be a step in the right direction.
- Peace operations require **realistic timelines** that are aligned with consistent funding. Generational changes cannot be expected to take place within the short life spans of these operations, nor should long-lasting stability be confused with positive and sustainable peace. Specifically, a mandate to restore and extend state authority should be seen as part of a broader process of supporting public policies that respond to citizens’ needs and priorities.
- Research on **lessons learned during transition and drawdown** of peace operations, including on the use of compacts to manage expectations and relationships, would help to understand the role of state authorities in sustaining peace. The impending drawdown of peace operations in Liberia, Côte D’Ivoire, and Haiti—each with restoration and extension of state authority as central to the exit strategy—offers an opportunity to learn such lessons.

- The UN should **build partnerships with the private sector**, which has a significant interest in the establishment of security and rule of law and the restoration of an environment conducive to industry and commerce on the national and regional levels.
- Peace operations mandated to restore and extend state authority have an opportunity to **embed this mandate in the concept of sustaining peace**. Ideally, such mandates should not be excessively detailed, allowing missions to establish needs and tasks through on-the-ground consultations. Sustaining peace and prevention should be conceived as enablers for peace operations rather than as infringing on state authority.
- There should be a more **proactive and flexible role for the Peacebuilding Commission** in prevention and sustaining peace. The Peacebuilding Commission enjoys some comparative advantages over bodies such as the Security Council, particularly in enabling political and financial support to on-the-ground diplomacy and local prevention efforts. Communication and coordination between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund should also be strengthened.