



CHAPTER 8

Pursuing Pathways for Peace: Recommendations for Building Inclusive Approaches for Prevention

A surge in violent conflicts in recent years has left a trail of human suffering—displacing millions, fracturing societies, and suspending development progress in affected countries. The costs of destruction and lost economic growth are enormous. So, too, are the costs of response and recovery. Preventing these conflicts would have protected the lives and dignity of millions in addition to protecting substantial development gains that have, instead, been lost.

This study presents the evidence to support a renewed focus on prevention:

- Chapter 1 presents the evidence that violent conflict is increasing after decades of relative decline. Direct deaths in war, numbers of displaced populations, military spending, and terrorist incidents, among others, have all surged since the beginning of this century. Conflicts are more internationalized, are more protracted, cross borders more often, and are fought by more nonstate actors than in recent decades.
- Chapter 2 shows how this rise in violence is taking place in a rapidly evolving global context. Growing interdependence has created opportunities for development progress, but also amplified the impact of risks that transcend national borders, such as climate change, population movements, and transnational organized crime.
- Chapter 3 presents the pathways framework, highlighting that conflict risks exist at various levels and that preventive action, as part of efforts to sustain development and peace, needs to identify solutions to imminent or ongoing violence and address underlying risks of conflict through incentives, institutional reforms, and investment in structural factors.
- Chapter 4 shows that grievances related to real and perceived exclusion and inequalities among groups are fueling many modern conflicts. Groups and elites are mobilizing around complex issues of identity and narrative to escalate and sustain conflict. The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important vehicle for addressing these risks.
- Chapter 5 shows that, to prevent cycles of violence, action must focus on the interaction among different dimensions of risk across arenas of power, opportunity, services, justice, and security. States hold the primary responsibility for resolving conflicts peacefully in these arenas, sometimes with the support of coalitions of actors.

- Chapter 6 provides evidence that preventive strategies are most effective and can only be sustained when they come from within societies. Many governments at differing levels of capacity are working in concert with national and often with international partners to implement a variety of strategies that reduce the risks of violent conflict by addressing structural factors, institutions, and above all incentives of actors.
- Chapter 7 demonstrates that many international efforts have helped countries to emerge from violence in many settings, but are challenged by the growing complexity of conflicts today. Effective preventive action must be grounded in national processes, be implemented when early risks are perceptible, and support initiatives, at various levels, to prevent the escalation of violence.

At the center of this study is the appreciation that, to be effective, prevention needs to be recognized as the collective responsibility of all actors of society and an integral part of our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Prevention must be based on inclusive partnerships in all sectors and at all levels. States need to improve collaboration in the development of multilateral solutions when unilateral solutions will not suffice. Collaborating to revitalize systemic prevention—addressing those risks that no country can address alone and that are in nature international—as well as committing to cooperation and collaboration in the development of tools supporting preventive action in countries and regions at risk of violence are vital. This study posits that prevention enhances sovereignty by relying on national capacity and ensuring that international support is based on engagement with states and national actors.

The first section of this chapter sets out three principles for prevention. Above all, prevention must be *sustained* over the time needed to build more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Prevention must be *inclusive* and build broader partnerships across groups to identify and address the grievances that fuel violence. Prevention

must actively and directly *target* patterns of exclusion and institutional weaknesses that increase the risk of violent conflict.

The second section presents an agenda for action for national actors. Prevention strategies are successful when they increase capacity for constructive contestation, allow disputes to be managed peacefully, and protect people from the threat of violence. This section offers options available for supporting peaceful pathways by targeting the interaction between grievances and contestation across key arenas of power, opportunity, services, and security and justice.

The third section explores how international actors can effectively organize for prevention to overcome incentives that undermine their support for national partners. It includes a critical look at the organizational incentives that frustrate effective collective action and prevent engagement before a crisis reaches its acute phase.

Principles for Prevention

The evidence amassed by this study indicates, overwhelmingly, that, to address the complex and integrated nature of contemporary conflict-related risks, prevention should be sustained, inclusive, and targeted.

Prevention must be sustained. It is easy, but wrong, to see prevention as a trade-off between the short and long term. Preventive action must address immediate crises while investing to reinforce a society's pathway toward peace. Achieving prevention goals requires flexibility, and development investments should be integrated into overarching strategies, with politically viable short-term and medium-term actions. The need for sustainability requires balancing effort and resources so that action does not reward only crisis management. Those working on prevention face irrelevance if their time horizons stretch beyond political and investment cycles (table 8.1).

Prevention must be inclusive. Too often, preventive action is focused on elites. In complex, fragmented, and protracted conflicts, an inclusive approach to prevention puts an understanding of grievances and agency at the center of national and

TABLE 8.1 A New Paradigm for Prevention

Today's challenges	A new paradigm
<p>Short term Aspires to be long term, but the short term dominates</p>	<p>Short and long term Shorter-term results increase the attractiveness of sustained and strategic approaches to prevention</p>
<p>Slow and inflexible Lacks flexibility and agility to act in or create windows of opportunity</p>	<p>Adaptive More agile approaches adapt in the face of changing risks and opportunities</p>
<p>Top down Risks identified by elites and direction set by a small group of specialists</p>	<p>People-centered Partnerships at all levels identify risks and develop solutions</p>
<p>Fragmented Highly technical, isolated in silos</p>	<p>Integrated Solutions increase resilience to multiple forms of risk, with effective prevention tools often in the hands of actors for whom conflict is not a primary focus</p>
<p>Delayed Dominated by crisis response, with prevention focused only on the most immediate risks</p>	<p>Proactive Early and urgent action is taken to tackle and manage directly the full range of risks that could lead to violent conflict</p>
<p>Weakens leadership Prevention seen as undermining national sovereignty</p>	<p>Strengthens leadership Prevention enhances national sovereignty and expands the scope of action for governments</p>

international engagement. It recognizes the importance of understanding people and their communities: their trust in institutions, confidence in the future, perceptions of risk, and experience of exclusion and injustice. It uses this understanding to disaggregate risks and build inclusive responses to risk that enhance state legitimacy, reduce polarization, and avert violence.

Prevention must be targeted. Preventive action must actively and directly target grievances and exclusion across key arenas of contestation before, during, and after violence. Once group grievances become entrenched, it is harder for leaders and other national actors to find common ground and build consensus for actions that can reduce the risk of violence.

An Agenda for Action: Prevention in Practice

The principles—sustained, inclusive, and targeted—help to shift thinking about prevention; to effect real change, they must be put into practice. This section presents an agenda for action that can guide national actors as they partner for prevention.

Preventive action requires comprehensive approaches that respond simultaneously to

the causes and impacts of violence, while mitigating the risks of future outbreak and escalation. Prevention of violent conflict should be a collective outcome, bringing together security, development, and political efforts around shared priorities, with development policy as a central instrument for addressing the risk of violent conflict.

The lessons of successful prevention that come across in the study show how national actors, to be effective, need to target several important policy and program areas:

1. Monitoring risks
2. Addressing multidimensional risks
3. Aligning peace, security, and development efforts
4. Implementing a people-centered approach to prevention
5. Sustaining prevention across levels of risks.

Monitoring Risks of Violent Conflict

Engaging in preventive action early, before the outbreak of violence, requires a shift from early warning of violence to awareness of risk. Development planning should integrate the identification of risk and enable

multisectoral responses. Risk management systems should not be limited to information sharing; instead, they should support decision making geared toward rapid response, policy change, and redirecting of investment.

Monitor exclusion. Preventive strategies need to be based on an understanding of the dynamics of exclusion and, more generally, the grievances of social groups. This understanding should be based on regular monitoring of horizontal inequalities among groups or geographic areas and other forms of exclusion, as well as assessment of societal cleavages such as gender inequality and youth exclusion. As much as possible, exclusion should be monitored around access to power, resources, services, and security. These efforts should be based on SDG indicators, targeting horizontal inequalities across economic, political, and social dimensions. Several SDGs, including most notably, but not exclusively, SDG 5, SDG 10, and SDG 16, address exclusion.¹ This monitoring requires assessing the intersection of exclusion with broader risks such as climate change.

Monitor perceptions and grievances of social groups. Perceptions matter, are not always related to objective data, and are often missed by traditional surveys and regular assessment tools. Innovative techniques, such as high-frequency surveys, polling, and focus groups can facilitate monitoring of public perceptions over time.² While monitoring perceptions has become a valuable tool of public policy formulation, assessments of individual or group perceptions need to be mainstreamed in preventive action. Perception monitoring needs to be undertaken with full awareness of the need for safeguards related to the security and privacy of individuals, so that the data cannot be used for repression or exclusion based on identity; it also needs to be undertaken with sensitivity to the context in which these surveys have been carried out (Sartorius and Carver 2008).

Strengthen early warning systems. Early warning systems (EWSs) are designed to initiate rapid actions to support prevention from the community level to the regional

level. Noting that the risks of conflicts are escalating rapidly and becoming protracted, particularly in border or remote areas, early warning systems that monitor short- and medium-term risks need to be reinforced and linked to appropriate action (Defontaine 2017).

Harness technology to improve monitoring. Considerable progress has been made in applying information and communication technologies to collect perception data; such technologies can be particularly efficient in remote and conflict-affected areas, where exclusion can be felt acutely and where access is often most difficult. Real-time data collection methods such as crowdsourcing³ and crowdseeding,⁴ social media monitoring, geospatial technology, and mobile data collection tools provide opportunities—many of them low cost—to improve timeliness, detail, and nuance in monitoring.

*Ensure that survey and data collection is sensitive to conflict and capacity.*⁵ The way data are accessed and shared requires strategies that balance risks and opportunity. The dissemination of data on group perceptions of security, services, resources, and power can, if not carefully used, reinforce polarization (Haider 2014; Putzel 2010). At the same time, limiting data to the use of a narrow group of technocrats can reduce the benefit of data collection, as the many actors that can play a key role in prevention would not benefit from this information. Finally, adding complex risk-monitoring systems where data collection capacity is already challenged can be counterproductive. Where possible, it is advisable to integrate risk monitoring into ongoing data collection efforts—for example, household surveys and price data collection—or to combine their setup with careful attention to long-term capacity building and financial sustainability.

Addressing the Multidimensionality of Risk

National actors are dealing with multiple risks simultaneously and are constrained by limited budgets, political capital, and time.

Chapter 3 emphasizes that risks, whether exogenous to a country, such as climate change and cross-border movements, or endogenous, such as contested elections, can intersect and accumulate to increase vulnerability to violence.

Develop integrated peace and development plans. Responding to complex interrelated risks almost inevitably requires that institutions act in concert in support of common objectives using different instruments. This requires a level of integrated planning that is often challenging. Actors working on poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, social service delivery, and environmental management need to come together, at different levels of government, to identify and prioritize conflict risks and responses under a single framework aligned with the SDGs. Such plans should identify collective outcomes across the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus, while respecting their mandates, bringing together mandates around shared objectives and, where possible, reinforcing and strengthening capacities at national and local levels. At the same time, addressing risks of conflict that evolve and change relatively rapidly requires adaptability and flexibility. The New Way of Working launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 provides a possible framework for such actions based on the Agenda for Humanity.⁶ The New Way of Working advocates for pooled and combined data, analysis, and information; better coordination of planning and programming processes; effective leadership for collective outcomes; and financing modalities to support closer collaboration across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding operations.

Target border and periphery areas. Border areas and zones of low population density tend to be particularly vulnerable to risks of violence, as state presence is often weak, delivering services is often expensive, and identifying economic investments with positive rates of return is also a challenge. However, the benefits of addressing perceptions of exclusion and grievances can be well worth the investment. Such efforts often require innovative

ways of delivering services and strong community involvement in development efforts. Border regions, specifically, can often benefit from improved regional connectivity, if investments are made alongside transport infrastructure so that growth is inclusive and benefits are widely shared. Given the positive influence that trade can have on mitigating conflict, measures should be taken to reduce trade barriers and facilitate logistics.

Mitigate the impact of shocks when tensions are high. Shocks, whether economic, political, or security related, can act as triggers for violence. One crucial factor in preventing a shock from triggering a violent response is the ability of governments to address the impact of shocks in a way that is timely and distributes impact fairly. People increasingly expect governments to play a significant role in mitigating the effects of shocks. For governments with limited fiscal space and capability to respond flexibly and quickly, the support of the international community is key. In all of these cases, it is important to ensure clear communication and outreach to the population to explain the nature of the shocks and the government response. How to do this will depend on the nature of the shock and the specific context. Price shocks are particularly sensitive, and macroeconomic management is an important tool for prevention. The ability of governments to introduce compensation rapidly to the groups most affected and to adjust the regulatory framework to address speculative behaviors can play a central role in preventing violence from starting or escalating.

Target action and resources to arenas of contestation: power, resources, security, and services. As the spaces where access to livelihoods and well-being are determined and where power imbalances manifest most clearly, these arenas present both risks and opportunities. These are areas of focus where governments can effectively use redistributive policies to address underlying risks of conflict. Resolving complex disputes in these arenas requires inclusive policy and institutional reforms as well as solid

management of conflict. Table 8.2 lays out guidance on specific actions in each arena where governments can help to ensure that contestation is productive (nonviolent) instead of destructive (violent). These actions are far from exhaustive, but indicate some possible entry points.

Aligning Peace, Development, and Security

In addressing the risk of violent conflict, much stronger synergies need to be established between peacebuilding efforts, security provision, and economic and social

TABLE 8.2 Ensuring Productive Contestation in Key Arenas

Arena 1: Power and governance	Arena 2: Land and natural resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing a premium on responsible political leadership, encouraging the broad participation of all political actors, and mitigating “winner takes all” processes are key. Inclusive, representative, and embedded power-sharing arrangements create greater chances for peaceful pathways. Institutionalizing power-sharing arrangements via constitutions and other legal frameworks, rather than ad hoc arrangements, improves their sustainability. Decentralizing, devolving, or allowing autonomy of subnational regions or groups can help to accommodate diversity and lower the risk of violence at the national level. Space for civil society engagement, itself diverse and contested, has to be preserved (or opened up where lacking) as a vital link to local constituencies. An independent and involved private sector can moderate the behavior of actors and facilitate connections where tensions manifest. Credible and robust electoral authorities, preelection mediation, and protection of the right to vote, especially for women and marginalized groups, help to create incentives for peaceful elections. Dialogue and consensus to agree on the “rules of the game” help to ensure nonviolent power sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tensions around resources tend to be strongest at the local level. Community and local dispute resolution mechanisms can help to manage disputes in the short to medium term, while longer-term reforms are agreed upon, designed, and trialed. Land and housing reforms and policies to improve access to water have different impacts on women and disadvantaged groups; these groups need to be integral to decision making. Securing land rights can reduce tensions, recognizing that a continuum of a wide range of different types of land tenure rights exist and should be protected. Robust mechanisms to ensure multiple uses of land and water can manage contestations between groups such as pastoralists and farmers. Cooperation and negotiations between riparian countries and subregions on water sharing can provide the foundation for peaceful relations. Climate change, population growth, urbanization, and the expansion of large-scale agriculture can exacerbate tensions around water access and use. Equitable oversight mechanisms regarding the use and management of extractives, including with regions on the division of benefits, can offset tensions; involvement from the private sector is essential.
Arena 3: Service delivery	Arena 4: Security and justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable service delivery can exert an indirect influence on reducing the risk of violence by reinforcing the legitimacy of the state. How services are delivered and how fair they are perceived to be matter at least as much for state legitimacy as who delivers them or their quality. Participatory processes and redress mechanisms can help to lessen grievances around service delivery. Issues related to local corruption can often be reduced through community control mechanisms and empowerment of citizens. The local community can play a role in the delivery of services, but the state must retain an overall presence to be seen as legitimate. Concerted effort should be made to reach an increasing number of remote or underserved communities to ameliorate grievances and ensure human capacity. Exclusion in education represents a particularly strong risk for fueling grievances and is central to preventing violent conflict. Education for peace and citizenship can play a key role for prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced parliamentary, civilian, and internal oversight of security institutions can boost reform. Broad-based consultations improve the sustainability and effectiveness of security reform. Greater transparency in public expenditure of the security sector can support greater accountability of security forces and increase public confidence. Antidiscrimination legislation, access to free legal aid, and inclusion in the judiciary of marginalized groups can help to manage risks around exclusionary justice systems. In the context of heightened social tensions, addressing grievances related to systematic abuses in the past can help to alleviate the risks of renewed violence. Bottom-up approaches to justice reform should be rooted in an understanding of the way people resolve conflicts in their everyday lives. Greater diversity, consideration of gender, and community representativeness can strengthen the legitimacy and quality of security forces.

development. Local or national planning should be integrated within single guiding documents to ensure synergies among various actors and actions. Specific national-level coordination platforms should help to ensure complementarity between these different components of prevention in the field.

Ensure that security and development objectives are compatible. In high-risk contexts, development planners should recognize that groups with grievances might not be the poorest and might not be in areas of high potential for economic growth, yet failing to make investments that could channel their grievances into productive contestation can lead to violent conflict, which can wipe out larger development gains. Stability poles should become an important focus of development actions in areas where risks of violence are high and security is an issue. Security, implemented as a service to the local population, not only serves to identify and address security threats but also is key to protecting rights, property, and economic livelihoods. When security interventions are warranted, social services and economic support should be provided in tandem, so that armed forces are not the only interface between the state and the population. To avoid the perceptions that development actions are only done to facilitate the acceptance of a securitized approach, armed forces should not directly support or execute development programs that civilians could implement effectively.

Address the fiscal dimensions of prevention. In many countries dealing with high risk of violence or where violence is already high, domestic revenue is low or dependent on volatile commodity prices, and national finances are often in fiscally precarious situations. In order to implement preventive policies effectively, states need minimal fiscal space. Relying exclusively on donor financing for preventive programs and projects often results in a proliferation of programming that is outside state control and not sustainable. The state needs to have access to a certain level of

financing to be able to pay civil servants, especially those working in security and justice and other core services, to implement core state functions across the country, and to have the discretion necessary to disburse financing rapidly to geographic areas with higher risk. Budgetary support should be considered for well-designed policies for prevention, when they are sufficiently transparent and when they integrate accountability mechanisms.

Integrate security sector reform with other institutional reforms. While the status quo is that security sector reforms are often addressed separately from other institutional reforms, a shift toward preventive action will require that issues of accountability, procurement, payment, and others follow the same rules for security services as for the rest of the civil service. This is particularly important to ensure transparency and facilitate civilian oversight. In parallel, it is important that support to the security sector be conducted in line with principles of national ownership and in coordination with other sectors. In some cases, a recently concluded peace process can offer an opportunity to promote a culture of transparency and openness and to move toward a “people-centered” approach to security and justice sector reform. In such contexts, national actors can place priority on increasing the visibility and transparency of police services through community dialogue and joint action, integrating women and minorities into policing structures, and developing local security accountability forums. These measures can help to avoid the recurrence of violent conflict by increasing the accountability of the security sector.

Establish credible forums for dialogue and exchange. Prevention efforts should focus on strengthening the capacity of society for prevention—not just the state. Supporting local actors’ efforts in prevention is a critical part of better understanding and addressing local grievances. Establishing forums at different levels of society for dialogue and exchange of ideas and building capacity through development assistance—training, development of guidance, and institutional

strengthening—for national and local actors can build a society’s capacity to mediate between social groups as well as between various elite interests. Many such efforts can be integrated into development programming (Rakotomalala 2017). Such capacity development assistance is already pursued in some instances by the United Nations and some development organizations and can help to build mediation capacity across lines of division or long-standing conflict. However, for this decentralized approach to mediation and peacebuilding to work, it is important to create synergies among various efforts at local, national, and regional levels and with diplomatic efforts.

Implementing a People-Centered Approach to Prevention

National actors should seek to reorient service delivery systems to make people partners in the design and delivery of public services. Emerging evidence appears to confirm the relative importance of *how* people are engaged as compared to *what* resources or services they receive, especially in areas of weak state presence or contested state legitimacy (Marshak et al. 2017; Mcloughlin 2015). National actors can contribute to addressing grievances through strengthening more inclusive and accountable approaches to development.

Mainstream people’s engagement in community development programs and local conflict resolution. It is important to empower underrepresented voices such as women, youth, and marginalized groups and to increase the quality of people’s engagement. An inclusive process for selecting representatives from diverse groups is critical for building trust and creating meaningful participation. Furthermore, service delivery should be reoriented to make people partners in the design and delivery of public services and to strengthen trust in local and central government. Making people partners is done most effectively through mainstreaming participatory and consultative elements for all planning and programming in areas at risk of violent conflict. Mainstreaming

these elements can help to ensure that all efforts are focused on locally defined problems and that proposed solutions are accepted as legitimate by all relevant stakeholders, thereby ensuring ownership and stronger trust in service providers, particularly central and local governments. Integrating local authorities—both informal and formal—in community development programs is important, so that the efforts improve the social contract at both local and national levels.

Link grievance-handling mechanisms to development actions. Programs need to allocate resources to ensure that grievances are mediated quickly and transparently. Development actors should integrate support for national and local mediation practices as part of existing governance and economic planning and programming. This effort should include addressing national issues—for example, establishing national development priorities targeting long-standing cleavages around resources, power, or equal access to services—as well as local grievances related to the functioning or distribution of services, land, and security. To this end, development and political actors should build on existing efforts with standing support for strengthening the mediation and negotiation capabilities of institutions as well as political leaders and supporting middle-range leadership with influence and authority—traditional or modern—to convene the relevant actors and build consensus around contested issues.

Engage nonstate actors in specific platforms for peacebuilding. In many countries, prevention requires new coalitions that more accurately reflect the importance of young people, women, and representatives from the private sector, civil society, and community-based organizations. The growing power and preponderance of nonstate actors mean that many actors in conflict today are not accessible by traditional diplomatic platforms or via state actors. Individuals and communities at the local level have the highest stakes in preventing violence, and effective, lasting solutions must begin with them. The inclusion of such partners is key to defusing tensions, restoring confidence,

influencing a more peaceful narrative, providing access to local-level justice systems, and improving transparency and accountability through, among others, mechanisms such as participatory budgeting and third-party monitoring.

Sustaining Preventive Action across Levels of Risk

Different actions are needed in situations of emerging risk, high risk, and open violence and in postviolence contexts. As such, actors across development, security, political, and humanitarian sectors need to work more closely across all levels of risk according to their comparative advantages. Figure 8.1 illustrates how this shift could look. In the current paradigm, development actors tend to decrease engagement, or halt altogether, when risks escalate, while political actors enter the scene only once violence is present. This study argues, instead, for a focus on early action by all actors, stronger partnerships, and shared financing platforms that spread prevention throughout policies and programs. This study posits that all actors have a role to play at all times, while acknowledging that different actors can be more or less prominent at different times.

This is not simply a call for better integration: exploiting comparative advantages across sectors has been acknowledged as the best approach for decades and most recently, at the international level, in the 2015 review of United Nations peace operations (UN Security Council and UN General Assembly 2015). This requires differentiated approaches across levels of risks (described in table 8.3), where existing tools can converge to sustain prevention given the constraints and windows of opportunity that these categories of risk can create (figure 8.2).

Preventing Recurrence

The findings of the *World Development Report 2011* underscore the high risks of conflict recurrence in postconflict environments, particularly if underlying grievances are not addressed in the settlement that ended the conflict (World Bank 2011). To break out of this cycle and prevent recurrence of violence, governments should focus on building more legitimate institutions and investing in people’s security (World Bank 2011). Yet, building such institutions is a long-term process. Meanwhile, national reformers need to rebuild trust between the state and the population by focusing on

FIGURE 8.1 Siloed Approach to Prevention

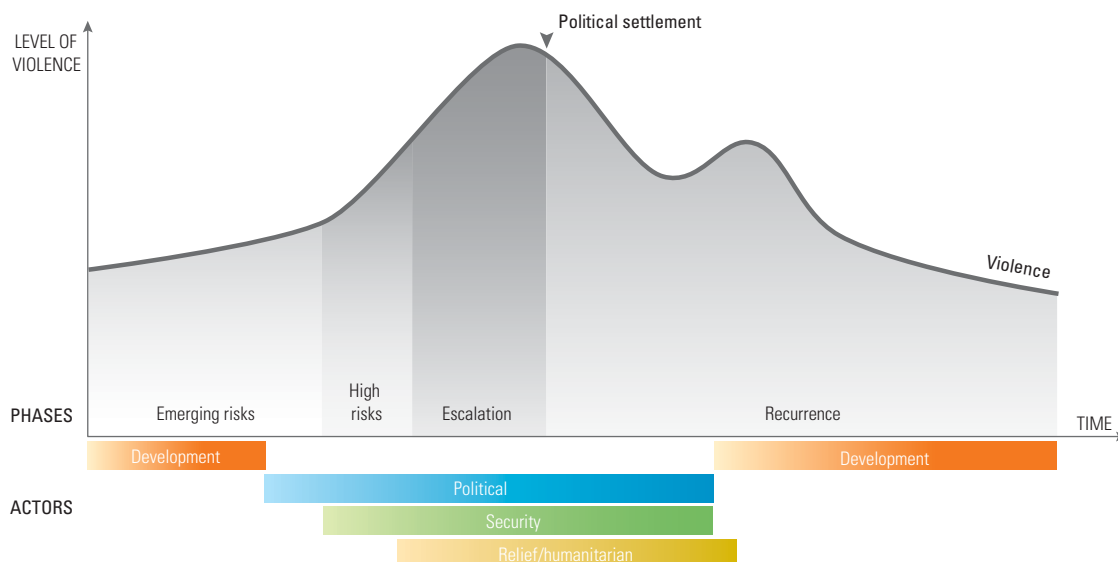
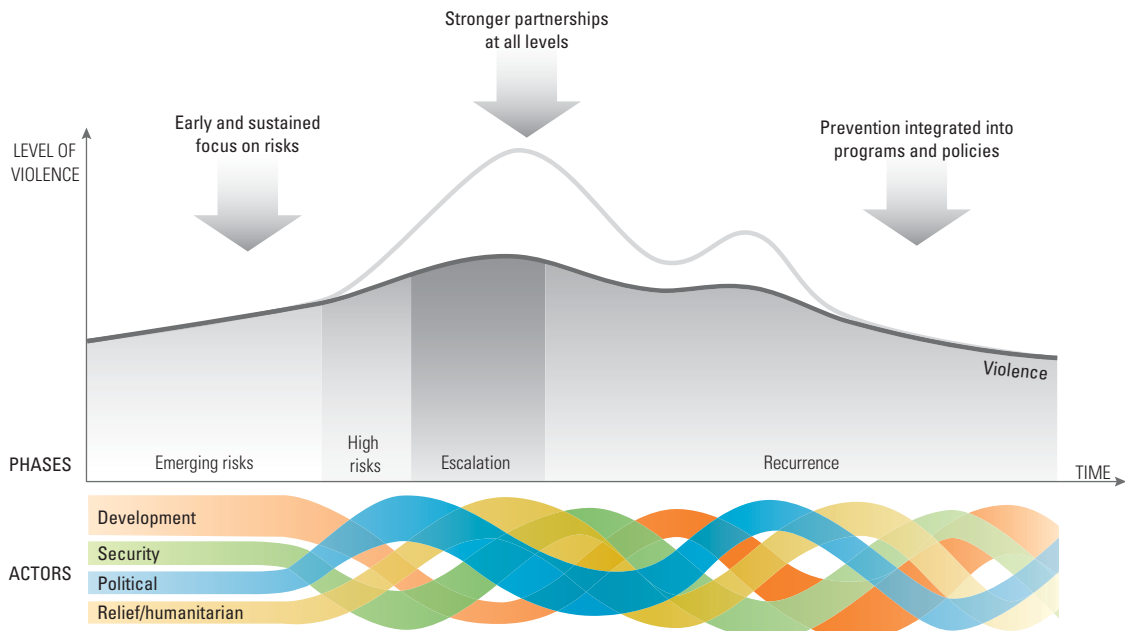


TABLE 8.3 Differentiated Approaches across Levels of Risk

Area	Emerging risks	High risks	Escalation
Monitoring	Most violent conflicts today are rooted in grievances that stem from inequality among groups and political, economic, and social exclusion. Addressing risk early on means identifying and addressing inequality, exclusion, and feelings of injustice that arise when groups believe they are not getting their fair share.	Addressing actors' incentives for violence is key to averting outbreak, including perceptions of security. Scaling up mediation is central at various levels during this period. As tensions escalate, it is important to monitor and manage effectively potential conflict triggers, reinforce early warning systems, and ensure that they are connected to early action.	Addressing and reducing humanitarian needs are the priority during conflict. Where possible, development approaches should be undertaken simultaneously to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, build resilience, and maintain the capacities of institutions that are still able to function.
Shocks	As with a financial crisis, the reluctance to adjust in the face of external shocks may accelerate the onset of the fiscal and financial dimensions of the crisis. A preventive approach calls for the design of "slow and steady" policy adjustments to achieve sustainability, which get a head start on potential crises through earlier actions than is normally the case.	Prioritize macrofiscal stability, commodity price decline, and indicators of expectations such as capital flight, banking system stress, and exchange rate depreciation. Surveillance and enforcement to prevent financial flows linked to conflict financing are also important.	It is important to deescalate conflict; to avoid distributing resources that are likely to be perceived as exacerbating intergroup tensions; and to focus on fiscal, wage, and social protection programs that are aimed at reducing inequity among social groups within countries. Reductions in intergroup inequality are likely to protect against shocks.
Arenas	It is important to reform state institutions or legal structures and address narratives that could be contributing to violence mobilization at the central and local levels. Group-based exclusion from power and resources, land issues, abuses by security forces, limited or low quality of basic services, and lack of redress mechanisms often combine to increase the risks of violence.	Build confidence by signaling a change in direction and taking visible actions to show that grievances will be addressed. Hold transparent dialogue on areas of tension and demonstrate a commitment to peaceful change, inclusion, and collaboration, including holding actors, particularly security actors, accountable to the population.	Where possible, it is important to preserve the fiscal, physical, and political integrity of the state as a platform for political negotiation and service delivery. Establish parallel delivery mechanisms able to complement humanitarian assistance and reach insecure areas. This support may also consist of continuing to invest in development in areas not affected by conflict.
Partnerships	It is important to develop normative and legal mechanisms to respond to crisis and to bring various actors around common platforms to have a frank discussion on risks and how to address them.	Build coalitions with nonstate actors to reach areas and groups with limited state presence. Invest in innovative delivery mechanisms that can address grievances even in the midst of a conflict. Civil society and community networks can provide the basis for partnerships and help to bridge difficult divides.	It is important to engage international and regional partners.

FIGURE 8.2 Sustained Approach to Prevention



confidence-building measures, support for livelihood activities, efforts to address the past, and development of sound security and justice institutions.

Civil society and informal institutions play a key role in reducing risks. International experience has shown that measures to strengthen inclusiveness of civil society institutions are effective in rapidly decreasing the risk of conflict recurrence (Paffenholz et al. 2017). For example, the inclusion of civil society in the negotiation, contents, and implementation of the agreement is a key factor for the success of peace agreements and can help induce governments to show commitment to addressing the grievances that have been at the origin of violent conflict (Lanz 2011; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). In many cases, informal institutions such as community leadership, religious institutions, and traditional governance systems can also play an important role in resolving conflicts and avoiding the break-out of violence.

Organizing for Prevention

The High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations calls for building a collective commitment to prevention (UN Security Council 2015; UN Security Council and UN General Assembly 2015). To do so, the international community should (1) align incentives; (2) share risks assessments openly and candidly; (3) build partnerships at local, national, regional, and international levels; and (4) provide financial and human resources support that is designed more appropriately for preventing crises than for responding to them.

Align Incentives

Development organizations should adjust incentives toward prevention. Chapter 7 shows that the current incentives of multilateral systems to engage in dialogue with national governments to facilitate a greater and earlier focus on risks remain weak, especially among development actors. Since the 1990s, the development focus among important bilateral and multilateral agencies started to shift toward supporting

national institutions and actors in conflict prevention. However, international development actors and multilateral development banks are still constrained from engaging on sensitive issues with governments by their mandates, intergovernmental agreements, and institutional culture. In precrisis contexts, these constraints limit the scope for development programming and diplomatic efforts to address causes of tension, even when lessons from other countries are readily available. Pressure to disburse funds, resistance to addressing conflict risks that have not yet resulted in violence, and the need to satisfy domestic constituencies in donor countries can undermine incentives to undertake preventive action. Assisting national governments in developing institutions that are just, inclusive, and capable of sustaining peace should be a mainstay of development to leave no one behind. The call for such a commitment should be made at the highest levels of management to signal a change in culture and approach.

Peace and security actors should work with development actors to incorporate longer-term perspectives. By nature of their mandates, international actors engaged in peacemaking and peace operations tend to have a stronger focus on immediate needs, whether that means finding entry points for political engagement or addressing security concerns. While these efforts are critical to putting societies on pathways for peace, they should also assist the design of long-term development strategies to build capacity and create sustainable institutions and committed citizenship. For effective and sustained prevention, greater attention should be paid to increasing economic and social resilience. Collaboration between peace and security and development actors on long-term strategies for sustaining peace should respond to demands on the ground, supported by enhanced analysis and planning capacity.

Share Assessments of Risks

This study highlights the importance of monitoring risks of grievances and exclusion for preventing violent conflict by

deploying more innovative approaches for data collection. Yet, if this information is to become the basis for more integrated action between different international actors and their national counterparts, the assessments of these risks must be shared and collectively agreed on.

International partners should commit to collective efforts to identify and understand risks at regional, country, and local levels. At present, action on prevention is defined by the absence of a common vision, objectives; systems; and capacities across development, crisis response, political, and peacekeeping work. The absence of collective efforts to assess and establish shared priorities translates into ad hoc and fragmented action. Nationally, these actions could include, for example, multistakeholder forums and processes bringing together governments; representatives from development, humanitarian, security, and diplomatic organizations; civil society; and private sector, academia, and regional organizations. In committing to joint risk assessments, it is important that international actors share key findings with the government and national actors. Engaging with the government and other stakeholders, including at the subnational level, through policy dialogue can help to generate a joint understanding of the challenges that need to be addressed.

Risk monitoring systems should be linked to resources and capacities to act. As described in chapter 7, EWSs have been set up in several regions at risk of violent conflict, often with the support of regional organizations. Such systems provide evidence for conflict prevention decision making, allowing stakeholders to anticipate trends and better understand the rapidly changing dynamics of situations. However, one of the main challenges of such systems is whether they can effectively influence response by actors at various levels. With the growing complexity of conflicts, the format of these systems needs to shift from information-sharing facilities toward effective monitoring of longer-term risks and vulnerabilities that is linked to decision making and cross-sectoral capacities to respond.

Joint risk assessments should articulate agreed priorities. Such assessments should be based on agreed indicators that allow trends to be monitored over time. The use of mutual accountability frameworks, or compacts, in countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia, have proven effective at galvanizing coordination and maintaining a sense of urgency of implementation once the media spotlight has moved on. The joint United Nations–European Union–World Bank Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA) offers such an approach. It provides an inclusive process to support dialogue and participation of a broad range of stakeholders in order to agree on the narrative related to the challenges and risks of conflict and uses this process to identify, prioritize, and sequence recovery and peacebuilding activities. The goal is not a technical output, but a joint narrative and shared prioritization framework between government and partners for how to mitigate and address conflict risks over time. Currently used mostly during and immediately following conflict, this approach could be used further upstream and developed into joint platforms for prioritizing risks. For example, in Cameroon, the RPBA methodology was used successfully to help the government to respond to subnational pressures and prevent an escalation and spillover of the security and displacement crisis created by Boko Haram.

Create Stronger Regional and Global Partnerships

Strengthen regional analyses and strategies for prevention. With an increasing number of conflicts taking on regional dimensions, approaches to prevention need to be coordinated across countries to develop regional strategies to address critical risks early on. To the extent possible, international development, security, and political actors should work together to share risk analyses at the regional level. Such analyses should lead to the provision of strategic, political, and operational guidance and to integrated operational support for prevention and sustainable development. Such guidance and support require commitment to improved

regional analysis, strategies, and responses and enhanced cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

Facilitate stronger cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. The United Nations should enable and facilitate others to play their role. UN facilitation should be achieved through deepened ties with regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union and subregional African organizations, as well as other partners such as the European Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization of American States, and the Pacific Islands Forum. Enhanced cooperation should include encouraging the sharing of lessons, good practices, and methodologies as they relate to analyses and operations related to prevention.

Enhance diverse partnerships for prevention. International and regional action needs to leverage the comparative advantage of different groups and platforms, including civil society, the media, and the private sector, and to be more inclusive of groups that have not traditionally been part of development or diplomacy. Valuing women's leadership and including the contributions of youth are both essential to consolidating peace, as is mobilizing local mediation and conflict resolution forums.

Invest in anticipatory relationships with a range of stakeholders. In order to have access and influence when a crisis breaks out, international actors need to invest in relationships with a range of political and non-state groups as well as with regional stakeholders. While building these relationships takes time, such relationships can yield valuable information, strengthen sensitivity to context, and enhance the credibility of an envoy or mediator among the stakeholders whose buy-in is essential for conflict to be averted or assuaged. UN regional political offices are a good example of efforts to build such relationships.

Create stronger bridges between diplomatic and development actions. Peacemaking has advanced beyond "state-centric" models and increasingly is engaging through multi-track (or "horizontal") strategies. In some

circumstances, such strategies have created opportunities to align development planning with political processes. Linkages between mediation efforts and development assistance should be reinforced at national and subnational levels. For example, actors involved in mediation could complement their efforts by providing financing for development programming in priority areas to support confidence building and incentives for actors to engage in mediation. Enhanced attention to subnational grievances and conflicts, including through appropriate development or peacebuilding assistance, can forestall their escalation. Peace operations, through coherent approaches with development actors, can further the implementation of their political strategies and mandates and provide political leverage for shared prevention and sustaining of peace goals.

Improve Investment for Prevention

Financing for prevention remains risk-averse and focused on crises. Current models are too slow to seize windows of opportunity and too volatile to sustain prevention. Complex and multilevel prevention efforts are often constrained by the lack of readily available resources, resulting in ad hoc attempts to mobilize resources and too often in delayed and suboptimal responses.

Strengthen support for national financing capacity for prevention. Low-income countries face challenges related to limited fiscal space that also make investments in prevention difficult. As described in chapter 7, they are highly dependent on donor aid, which is unreliable and often comes in feast-or-famine cycles. Too frequently, budgetary support is provided quite narrowly for economic and institutional reforms without consideration of the efforts and reforms needed for prevention. International actors can offer support to national governments in retaining existing investments despite the risk for potential investors. Organizations like the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency can work with national governments and private investors to consider the type and reliability of insurance available for private investors in the country, what kind of

arbitration system is available, and whether foreign investors can obtain insurance for political risk.

Combine different forms of financing. Financing for preventive action requires different forms of financing to work with each other to support short-term and long-term outcomes. Even when fiscal resources are available, national budgets are often slow to change and need to be supported by other resources. Another major challenge to the provision of the necessary resources for prevention relates to middle-income countries. As chapter 1 shows, conflicts are often seen in such settings, yet middle-income countries typically are not eligible for “softer” lending facilities, which can help to incentivize investments in conflict prevention—that is, concessional financing and grants—and are increasingly facing constrained access to financing. Appropriate forms of financing across different phases of risk are important to bridge the gap. For example, making concessional financing available to middle-income countries to prioritize action in key areas or risks is an innovative means to build national capacities.⁷ This was done with the Concessional Financing Facility providing support for dealing with forced displacement in Jordan and Lebanon.

Support financing and help to foster an enabling environment for the private sector. The private sector, including small- and medium-size enterprises and international investors, can play an important role in preventing violent conflict. There is growing recognition that official development assistance (ODA) alone will not be sufficient to meet the SDGs and that much greater engagement from the private sector will be necessary to meet financing needs. It will be critical to prioritize private sector solutions where they can help to achieve development goals and to use scarce public finance where it is most needed. However, many countries that are most vulnerable to conflict face severe challenges in attracting private investment and financing. Sustainable and responsible private sector investments should help to grow more robust economies and build resilience in

countries that are most vulnerable and least equipped to deal with the impacts of crises. Such innovative approaches will be needed to attract greater private investment and, when coupled with conflict-sensitive approaches, can maximize the private sector’s contribution to peace. In addition to innovative financial solutions, the private sector also needs a strong enabling environment and complementary public investments to support the development of basic infrastructure and services.

Strengthen international financing mechanisms for prevention. Regardless of national financing strategies, dedicated funds for prevention and risk mitigation should be considered at the international level. Noting the lack of incentives for sustained and focused support for prevention, existing mechanisms like the International Development Association’s IDA18 Risk Mitigation Regime and or the UN Peacebuilding Fund should be scaled up. These funds could provide a vehicle for incentivizing investments in prevention. Targeted financial support can strengthen government policies that recognize and address emerging risks more proactively as well as build institutional resilience to sustain prevention efforts over time.

Strengthen financing for regional prevention efforts. Financing strategies should be designed to account for the risk of cross-border spillovers posed by regional conflict. There may be opportunities to learn from recent innovations for providing insurance for regional pandemics, such as the World Bank’s Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility, which funds coverage through financial markets and a complementary cash window. A financing facility that provides insurance coverage within a region destabilized by conflict could offer predictable, coordinated, and scaled-up disbursements of funds for countries with escalating risk in the key arenas described in this study, to be defined further for specific activation criteria. To receive the coverage, countries could be required to have a risk management plan in place that integrates development, diplomacy, and security sectors as well as a risk-monitoring platform with regional actors.

A Call for Action

This study shows that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the paradigm shift on prevention. If the 1992 Agenda for Peace and the 2005 World Summit were the precursors, the time is ripe to deal collectively with the challenges and to capitalize on the opportunities of an increasingly interdependent world.⁸

This study highlights and elaborates how synergies between peace and development can be effectively pursued. Where the SDGs call for inclusivity and for the imperative of leaving no one behind, this study provides evidence that forms of exclusion create risks of violent conflict. As the SDGs underscore the importance of protecting our environment, renewing our infrastructure, and combating climate change, this study highlights how structural factors intersect with exclusion and can increase the risks of violence. Where the 2030 Agenda envisages broad-based partnerships as a prerequisite for its implementation, the study puts agency at the focus of attention and calls for a recognition and inclusion of the growing diversity of actors in building coalitions for action from the local to the global level.

While there is no single formula for effectively preventing violent conflict, based on expert analyses of country cases, the study demonstrates that prevention works, saves lives, and is cost-effective. It estimates that “savings” generated from prevention range from US\$5 billion to US\$69 billion a year. The study establishes that efforts must be *sustained, inclusive, and targeted*. Preventing violent conflict is a continuous process requiring long-term domestic efforts to promote inclusive societies and institutions. Targeted engagement, through different entry points, is critical.

Implementing these principles requires a shift in policies and practices on the part of national and international actors. The case for prevention has been made. National and international actors have before them an agenda for action to ensure that attention, efforts, and resources are focused on prevention. It is time to address distorted incentives and to do the utmost to prevent

immense human suffering and avoid the exorbitant costs of conflict. The time to act is now.

Notes

1. A host of SDG targets and indicators could have relevance for assessing the risks of horizontal inequalities. Specifically, the following set of core targets for SDG 5, SDG 10, and SDG 16, respectively, are key: 5.1: end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; 10.2: by 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status; 10.3: ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard; 16.3: promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all; and 16.7: ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision making at all levels. In addition, many indicators collected through household surveys, including mortality rates, could be used to monitor horizontal inequalities, including among geographic areas.
2. Many governments use perception surveys, mini surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, community maps, and other techniques in policy making and testing. These methodologies can also be helpful in assessing risks in challenging contexts (Van de Walle and Van Ryzin 2011).
3. The most well-known example is Ushahidi, an open-source software program to collect information and do interactive mapping. It was first used after the 2007 presidential election in Kenya.
4. This term was first used in the Voix des Kivus project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2009–11). See <http://cu-csds.org/projects/event-mapping-in-congo/>.
5. Implementing monitoring of perceptions and issues such as horizontal inequality requires several important safeguards to be in place. Governments or other actors can use questions on perceptions, identity, and

aspirations to identify certain groups, target them for security purposes, deny people rights, or support implementation of exclusionary policies. It is essential that very strong attention be given to protecting the individual and collective rights of both the population interviewed and the people collecting the information. There are increasingly sophisticated methodologies to do this, such as asking the region of origin more than identity or asking difficult questions in a way that people can respond to directly or indirectly.

6. The Agenda for Humanity is a five-point plan that outlines the changes needed to alleviate suffering, reduce risk, and lessen vulnerability on a global scale. In the 2030 Agenda, humanity—people’s safety, dignity, and right to thrive—is placed at the heart of global decision making around five core responsibilities, including the prevention and ending of conflicts.
7. The World Bank’s Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCF), launched in April 2016, provides concessional or “International Development Association–like” financing to help middle-income countries to address the influx of refugees, with Jordan and Lebanon being among the first to receive assistance to manage spillovers from the refugee crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. Although concessional lending hinges primarily on income level, with the lowest rates reserved for the world’s poorest nations, the GCF alters this equation by offering concessional financing to countries like Jordan and Lebanon that promote a global public good by opening their borders to refugees. Facilities such as the GCF will be important sources of funding going forward, especially for incentivizing investments in preventative measures. See <http://globalcffi.org/about-us/objectives-and-scope>.
8. Since the mid-1990s, the UN “culture of peace” resolutions have recognized the fundamental link between peace, development, and human rights. In particular, the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted in 1999, details how actions taken through education; economic and social development; human rights; gender equality; democratic participation; understanding and tolerance; the free flow of information; and international peace and

security can serve to build a culture of peace. Only recently has a concerted effort been made to embed this mind-set and operational approach into the work of the United Nations.

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