



2012-14

Strategic Framework

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East hugs west after 60 years on Chakothei Bridge, Kashmir. © Muhammed Arif Urfi

1. Introduction

It is a dynamic time to be working in the field of peacebuilding. Conciliation Resources enters these next few years with renewed confidence and capacities that we have never enjoyed before. Our focus tends to be on the protracted conflicts not in the headlines, the so-called 'small wars'. We continue to stand by our partners facing huge challenges, in a rapidly changing and uncertain world, encouraged by the fact that the number and human costs of large-scale armed conflicts across the globe are steadily reducing.

We are part of a community of organisations still challenging international policy makers to 'rethink' their responses to conflict – to recognise the power of engagement and dialogue, and to work in ways that are more responsive and more creative. We are finding new answers to the question of 'how do we make peace?' In many of the contexts in which we work, we are seeing that peace agreements and political settlements are not only made at the official negotiation table. Working with women's groups, journalists, the private sector, liberation groups and others, has challenged us to ask who plays what roles in preventing violence and helping wars to end? Where does the work for this change take place? In learning from peace processes and planning and

evaluating our own work, we are seeing what works in affecting change and what that change from violence to peace really looks like.

Conciliation Resources can be a difficult ship to steer, with each programme responding to the particular challenges and priorities in its conflict context. We have chosen to write a strategic 'framework' rather than a 'plan', as we hope this will help to clarify our areas of core competence and more tightly define the parameters of our work, articulating a single overarching ambition.

This is not the first time we have set out our thinking for how we want to approach a three-year period. We have been working in many of the same contexts since we started 16 years ago, always engaging in a process of analysis and reflection with our partners, and adjusting our priorities and our approaches accordingly. Our last three-year plan was called 'preparing the ground for peace.' We set out a number of goals, and we have made significant progress against all of them. We said that we would "deepen and widen our impact", and the last three years saw us developing new programmes in India and Pakistan on Kashmir, new work in support of the peace process in southern Philippines (Mindanao), a new engagement in Colombia, and a renewed engagement in Fiji. We said that we would seek to exercise greater influence on national and international policy and practice; and over the last three

years, the policy, practice and communications team helped Conciliation Resources to find and raise our voice and influence with groundbreaking work on peacebuilding across borders, governance in conflict contexts and participatory conflict analysis and advocacy. We also undertook to strengthen our organisational systems and culture for planning and monitoring results. This includes assessing the impact of our work, what it is contributing to, and our ability to demonstrate and communicate these results. With an evaluation of the last 10 years of our work, a new look and redesigned website as well as new systems for monitoring and reporting on change, we have taken huge steps, though we also recognise this is a key area where we have more to do in the coming three years.

We are now a medium sized NGO, with a budget approaching £5 million and a talented team of over 30 people. Our ambitions have grown, but our way of working through close relationships of trust with local partners remains. I hope this document helps all of us in the organisation to make the informed, if sometimes difficult, decisions to chart the course ahead.

Andy Carl
Executive Director
November 2011, London

2. Our ambition for the next three years

By 2015, we will be able to point to several examples where the end of a conflict, or the prevention of an outbreak of violence, can be (at least partly) attributed to the influence and efforts of Conciliation Resources. This will mean paying close attention to influencing official processes, while continuing to work with our civil society partners on the many dimensions of peacebuilding. Over these three years, we will pay attention to our transition strategies and explore possible involvement in new contexts. We will continue to have a good reputation as one of the world's more experienced and capable peacebuilding NGOs, working with creative and inspirational partners and a staff team of 40+ and donor-partners, supporting an annual budget of £6 million.

What will we do more and less of?

This shared organisational ambition will inevitably mean that we *prioritise our engagement with what can be described as the formal peace or peacebuilding process (or the lack thereof)*. It will mean that, to some degree, all programmes will endeavour to have sustained and direct engagements with the primary conflict parties (including governmental, non-state and *de facto* authorities and armed liberation groups). We will help them to make linkages with other actors or to provide comparative insights from other peace processes. We will retain a clear focus on conflict prevention and resolution processes and *only engage in other work to the degree that it directly and essentially contributes to these goals*. If we see the opportunity, we should take risks and do the politically hard things where we have the relationships, competence and credibility to make the decisive difference.

How we will measure our progress in achieving impact

We will closely watch the dynamics of peacebuilding processes in the conflict contexts in which we are working – looking for significant changes and making our own assessments as to whether our actions can be attributed to having significant influence and impact. We will also draw on the datasets from a number of



Partners present their views to policymakers in Brussels. © Conciliation Resources/Sarah Bradford

institutions' tracking trends¹ to keep an eye on the broader trends and how we will contribute to a positive index movement.

3. Our vision, mission and values

Conciliation Resources is an independent organisation working with people in conflict to prevent violence and build peace. We're there for as long as we're needed to provide our advice, expertise and practical resources. In addition, we take what we learn to government decision-makers and others working to end conflict, to improve policies and practice worldwide.

Our vision

Our vision is of a world where people work together to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Our mission

Our mission is to provide practical support to help people affected by violent conflict achieve lasting peace. We draw on our shared experiences to improve peacebuilding policies and practice worldwide.

1. These include the Human Security Report; the Failed States Index; The State Fragility Index & Matrix; The Political Terror Scale, and the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index.

We aim to

Promote understanding of peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.

Create opportunities for dialogue between divided communities.

Strengthen peacebuilding policies and practice.

Support people to build peace.

Our values

Collaboration

We believe in working together to build peace. We work closely with groups and individuals from all sections of society to ensure that people directly affected by conflict are involved in its resolution.

Perseverance

We are dedicated to creating a just and lasting peace. We know that building peace takes time and so make commitments for the long-term.

Understanding

We appreciate the complexities of each conflict, and use our shared knowledge and expertise to adapt our approaches.

Creativity

We are bold in our thinking and passionate in our convictions. We are prepared to challenge assumptions and find new ways to influence change.



Dialogue Through Film screenings in Azerbaijan www.c-r.org/DTF © Conciliation Resources/Laurence Broers

4. Our approach

Our organisational approach is based on the assumption that political settlements and peace processes are most sustainable and effective when there are locally supported solutions, complemented by a conducive international environment and support. We take the wide view that such processes are, by nature, complex, involving many people and multiple initiatives to effect institutional, behavioural and attitudinal change. We understand the importance of making connections between these initiatives to ensure that efforts ‘add up’ to significant change. ‘Success’ for us means seeing the inclusion of civic actors, men and women, young and old, realising their own ambitions to see that the causes and consequences of their conflict are addressed effectively. Of course the ultimate measure is that further violence is prevented and armed conflict ended. This involves participatory and nonviolent processes that address exclusion and inequality in pursuit of justice and peace.

Putting our values into practice

Partnership

We work collaboratively with individuals and organisations in affected regions to find lasting solutions to conflict. These relationships are underpinned by trust and formal agreements. We see our role to accompany, support and, where useful, mentor partners, as well as acting as a bridge or convenor, promoting reciprocal access and exchange between the local, the national and international levels.

Comparative learning

Opportunities to reflect on comparative experiences of how others have faced and met comparable challenges can inspire and enable people to find new ways to influence change. Recording those experiences (notably in our *Accord* series) helps to provide both evidence and experience that can help people to see things from a new perspective and inspire ways of promoting peace.

Committed to the pursuit of social justice and human rights

We actively support processes and institutions that promote people’s rights, address exclusion and inequality and recognise related issues of the abuse of power. In pursuit of more just societies, our responses are attuned to the roles women and men are playing both in conflict and in its transformation.



Conciliation Resources' West Africa partners meeting in Freetown, Sierra Leone. © Fid Thompson

Linking practice and policy

Drawing on our expertise in the field and the authority of our local partners we develop our advocacy strategies, and support our partners in developing theirs. This involves promoting 'peoples perspectives' in peace processes and agreeing key messages and effective policy prescriptions in timely and succinct briefings.

Engagement while not taking sides

We work with many types of people and groups from states to armed groups, from those at the centre of processes to those that are marginalised (including armed groups). We do this by focussing on the creation of mutually acceptable processes, without promoting specific outcomes, which we recognise is the right and responsibility of the people living through the conflict themselves.

5. Where we work and why: countries and regions

The geographical focus of our work has evolved over time as a result of requests from people living in conflict regions and those concerned about the consequences of particular conflicts. We take decisions on where to work based upon a combination of factors: (a) the gravity of a conflict situation; (b) our degree of expertise and knowledge of the conflict and our ability

to bring on board appropriate expertise; (c) whether we feel able to contribute to processes of change; and (d) the degree to which others, within and outside the context, are working to address a given situation. We have agreed a set of guidelines that sets out our internal decision-making process.

From our early programmes in Fiji and West Africa, with a focus on Liberia and Sierra Leone, we developed initiatives in the Caucasus, initially in regard to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and subsequently Nagorny Karabakh. Addressing the regions affected by the Lord's Resistance Army saw a programme in Uganda evolve into an engagement in the East and Central African countries of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic. We seek to balance work in different regions of the world in order to enhance our comparative learning across conflicts, which contributed to our decision to initiate work with partners in the Philippines and Colombia. While we continue to facilitate links between peace and political actors in each country, we have also deepened our engagement in the Philippines. In the past four years, we have developed a new focus on the Kashmir conflict, working with partners on either side of the Line of Control in Kashmir as well as in India and Pakistan. Our commitment is to long-term accompaniment, where our support can provide added value to ongoing efforts to build peace.

Different factors drive conflicts in each of the regions where we work and violence has different degrees of intensity, often flaring in sporadic or targeted instances of death and destruction, but not being a constant. Together with our partners we devise strategies to navigate the security, humanitarian and developmental challenges while seeking to focus on the search for long-term political solutions.

Despite the apparent intractability in many of the contexts in which we work, a key lesson of politics in general, and peacebuilding in particular, is that change can often come quickly at unexpected moments and in unexpected ways. Therefore creating the foundations for constructive responses, which enable people to seize opportunities when they arise, and sometimes create these opportunities, remains a critical task in all our programme work.

6. Cross-organisational themes

Conciliation Resources has five key thematic areas, which are reflected across our regional programmes, our policy work and in our organisational learning:

Public participation

Promoting public participation in peace processes and conflict transformation has always been a critical part of our work and will remain core to what we do. We will increase our emphasis on linking local voices and perspectives into formal peace processes. We will continue our work on participatory conflict analysis, both as an integral part of our programme approach and as a policy issue. We will also explore particular elements of participation in more depth, including the impact of gender roles.

Engaging armed groups

Engaging armed groups in dialogue is essential to ending violence. We will continue to help promote, and create opportunities for, engagement with armed groups through our regional programmes where appropriate, through our policy work, and through responding to requests from groups affected by conflict.

Proscription remains a significant obstacle to engagement, and we will continue our work on this issue, building on our established name and expertise in this area, where few others are working.

Peace processes, dialogue and mediation

Our programmes continue to be actively involved in supporting peace processes and dialogue, often acting as a dynamic bridge between the local level and more formal dialogue processes. We will seek to influence peace processes to make them more creative, effective and participatory. We will use our involvement to share learning and reflections on emerging practice in order to improve international approaches.

Governance and peacebuilding

This is our newest thematic area, and has its roots in multiple areas of our work including: programme-led work in four regions addressing the governance challenges in conflict-affected contexts; policy work on governance, aid and development effectiveness; an internal exploration of the challenges of engaging with unrecognised or partially-recognised authorities (for example, in Nagorny Karabakh and Abkhazia respectively) and military regimes. We are also interested in conflict transformation in ungoverned areas, particularly borderlands and the associated issues of centre/periphery relations and 'people outside the system'.

Cross-border peacebuilding

War does not respect political or territorial boundaries. It forms part of wider, regional conflict systems through dynamics that cross borders such as refugee flows, mobile armed groups, narcotic or criminal networks, trade, or psychosocial ties. We recognise the need to analyse, understand and respond to conflicts regionally rather than through the traditional country-by-country basis of many interventions.



Staff at a Conciliation Resources workshop. © Conciliation Resources/Laurence Broers

7. The five priority areas that frame our work:

(1) Support people to build peace

We will work in developing the capacities and leadership of our partner organisations, networks, and individuals who act as intermediaries so that they can take on the challenges of conflict transformation work. We will support them in their efforts to build their peacebuilding skills, understanding and influence. We will assist and accompany them in securing the resources (funding, premises, transport) and supportive relationships that they require to do their work. We will use our influence with international organisations and national governments to advocate for the right of these individuals and organisations to be able to operate without hindrance or risk to their personal safety and wellbeing.

What will we do more and less of?

We will enter into new partnerships with people and groups who have the interest and potential to influence peace processes. In contexts where partners can do this work themselves, we will do less work seeking to influence public debates and understanding in local project implementation. We will also do less work where Conciliation Resources is playing the role of funder and ensure that, in paying attention to money, we are promoting our partners' financial independence.

How we will measure our progress in achieving impact?

We have developed a tool that enables our partners and ourselves to undertake joint assessments of the changes in their organisational and peacebuilding capabilities, and we intend to use and develop this tool for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

(2) Strengthen peacebuilding policies and practice

We will work to influence government policies and targeted multilateral agencies to recognise the rights, needs and interests of conflict-affected groups, and encourage them to employ conflict transformation approaches in doing so. We will illustrate the limitations of an over-emphasis on military responses to specific conflicts. We will promote local analysis, participation and advocacy, and in doing so we will help conflict parties to improve their understanding of their conflicts and the spectrum of options for progress. We will publish materials and promote processes that enable conflict actors to learn from comparative experience and explore new and innovative approaches. We will support partners in their efforts to improve governance in conflict-affected areas where we believe this can make a direct contribution to peacebuilding. Through these activities, we will contribute to international efforts to improve our field of practice.



Philippine and Colombian delegates meet with Moro women as part of the Colombia-Philippines exchange, The Philippines
© Mohalidin Suga

What will we do more and less of?

While there are many organisations seeking to influence policy-makers, we feel that Conciliation Resources' niche is in bridging the arenas of practical peacework with people and communities, professional practice, and influencing policy (this is symbolically represented in the three connecting circles of our logo). Our core competency thus rests on drawing on our practical experience and our abilities to promote opportunities for comparative learning on a practical rather than theoretical level. We have identified that in order to increase our global influence we will need to have fewer targets and precise strategies for engagement and influence.

How we will measure our progress in achieving impact?

We will have evidence of shifts in international policy that can, at least in part, be attributed to our strategies. We will collect evidence of where our partners have influenced policy with our having played a supportive role.

(3) Promote understanding of peaceful ways to resolve conflicts

Working in several conflict contexts, we will work with partners to raise levels of public awareness of peace-related issues and challenge widely held stereotypes. We will support partners so that the

concerns of their communities are reflected in official peacebuilding and peace processes. We will work with them to help influence their wider communities to be more receptive to change and conciliation. We will support key actors in peace processes to have a clear and common understanding of the concepts and options to resolve conflict issues, and we will promote cross-conflict understanding.

What will we do more and less of?

We will do more work to identify the particular groups who may otherwise play obstructive roles, and engage to influence them to avoid, or overcome, their spoiling tactics. We will also prioritise working with those constituencies who are influencing decision-makers. The media work that we support will be more clearly aimed at promoting critical debates about peace and obstacles to it. We will do less media work that is generally about informing the public about issues beyond the peacebuilding sphere. We will do less work with academic and research spheres but, where we do, we will ensure that this will be directly linked to practical discourse around peace processes.

How we will measure our progress in achieving impact

Much of our work in this area is with the media (working with journalists to produce films and

documentaries); work with partners themselves undertaking community education activities; and through our online and published resources. Our first measure will be the numbers of films and publications produced and downloads of materials from our website. We will track changes in public debates and public perceptions through a combination of tools and methods including public opinion surveys and media monitoring.

(4) Create opportunities for dialogue between divided communities

Our programmes will be tailored to facilitate dialogue in order to build links and relationships across conflict divides:

- >> We will work with conflicting or divided parties, cultivating interaction between them to facilitate dialogue and understanding and generate ideas for specific and practical changes.
- >> We will support communities (including displaced persons, ex-combatants and other marginalised and under-represented groups) in their efforts to voice their concerns, needs and interests to governments and non-state groups.
- >> We will engage with policy-makers to promote the importance of dialogue, exchange and mediation across conflict divides as critical paths for resolving conflict.
- >> We will support policies that enable people to travel freely across a conflict region, so that interaction and exchange can happen regularly without third-party assistance.

What will we do more and less of?

This area of work is about influencing attitudes in order to change behaviour. In our practice, this involves both 'single community' and/or 'cross-community' work. Both are challenging in different ways. We will do more facilitation of dialogue – playing a catalytic role. Our priority will be to ensure that our dialogue work remains challenging to participants and integral to addressing the issues that sustain conflict. We will do less work convening meetings with participants and partners who have already had many opportunities to meet.

How we will measure our progress in achieving impact

We will monitor both the number of dialogues and exchanges (including trainings) that have taken place within communities and across conflict divides, inviting participant feedback on the their quality, asking what do they do with it, how has it led to a change of behaviour and the permanency of that change. We will also assess the efficacy of our engagement by the degree to which we are able to engage critical interlocutors and constituencies to undertake dialogue around key issues that demand change. A long-term measure would be to see the growth of more 'normalised' relations across a conflict divide, noting the change in take-up of opportunities for contact.

(5) Strengthening the organisation to deliver on our mission

The foundation for our engagement in conflict contexts is the strength of our organisation. Over the next three years, our priorities will be to have:

- >> Created organisational systems and structures that sustain a culture that values learning – recording our experiences, developing new ideas, initiatives and practice. This will enable staff to develop further their peacebuilding skills and help us to gather evidence to articulate practice-informed policy messages.
- >> Effective design, performance monitoring and evaluation processes and systems that facilitate learning and reporting. We are particularly interested in engaging in collaborative efforts that contribute to extending our skills and learning in this area to our international and local partners.
- >> Consolidated our programme management structures to ensure that each programme is well planned, supported and able to respond to the critical challenges of the conflicts on which they work. We will continue to have programmes of varying sizes and we will ensure that each programme is managed and led in a way that balances capacities, commitments and ambitions, maximising our impact by engaging in strategic partnerships.



Cultural and religious leaders from DRC, CAR, South Sudan and Uganda discuss the LRA conflict, Uganda
© Conciliation Resources/Sarah Bradford

- >> Secured multi-year funding commitments from a diversified circle of statutory and >> philanthropic donors², built on good working relationships based on trust, confidence and our ability to prove our worth.
- >> Financial systems that develop in synch with the growth of our budget to ensure that we continue to manage the organisational resources in a responsible, efficient, transparent and accountable way.

developing a plan to guide us beyond the end of current generous partnership grants to help us to raise and use our funds responsibly. We also expect to find new premises and change working practices to accommodate this growth.

Growth

We will manage opportunities for organisational growth in response to opportunities to make a significant difference. Programme growth and priorities will be assessed against this strategic framework. We will ensure that we retain the community aspects of our organisational culture and that the incremental decisions to grow are driven by advancing the goals and ambitions laid out in this strategic framework. Given the opportunities and demands, we anticipate a rate of overall organisational growth of 5–10% year on year (33% over the three years). We will be

2. We are grateful to all of our donor partners for agreeing to accompany us through the next three-year phase, in particular the governments of the UK, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Australia and Belgium.

Annex 1: Reflections on our global context

Conflict trends

According to watchers of global trends, like the *Human Security Report*, the reduction in the number, risk and human costs of wars is continuing. But the world's protracted conflicts remain intractable. We are seeing little or no movement towards a resolution of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and their neighbours, nor in Afghanistan or Somalia, to name a few. Countries that have come out of war – especially those with low-to-average incomes – face a higher risk of returning to violence, and the more recent their last conflict, the greater the risk. While this headline trend is positive, and it seems the world is becoming a less violent place, there is a worrying counter-trend towards what the people at Simon Fraser University call 'smaller wars' (that is, fewer battle deaths per conflict).³ The number of these shows every sign of growing.

The *Human Security Report* attributes some of the downward trends in conflict to a number of factors, all of which have interesting implications for where and how Conciliation Resources continues to work:

- >> An increase in international peacebuilding and peacemaking activity; for example, a tenfold (1997–2007) increase in the number of Friends of the Secretary General, Contact Groups and other political arrangements that support peacemaking and post-agreement peacebuilding initiatives. Work to make such activism more widespread and effective would therefore appear to be an effective use of resources.
- >> Increasingly clear evidence that democracies reduce the risk of conflict underlines the importance of addressing governance challenges in states affected by conflict, as does the decline in governmental political discrimination against minority groups that is associated with a decline in the number of wars of self-determination. The increase in national and international

3. According to the *Human Security Report 2009–10*, p.10, there has been a "25 percent increase in conflict numbers between 2003 and 2008 ... due to a rise in the number of minor conflicts"

prosecutions of human rights crimes that is associated with a decline in human rights abuses poses interesting questions around the role of justice and accountability mechanisms as a means of addressing conflict.⁴

- >> There is also evidence that growing levels of economic interdependence also help reduce conflict. This links with our work to date on cross-border peacebuilding, and has implications for how we continue to stress the regional and cross-border dimensions of our work, as well as the significance of the role of regional organisations.

- >> The dynamics of some conflicts are also changing. Around the world, conflicts are becoming increasingly linked with criminal networks and activity, particularly in West Africa and Central America.

The 'Arab Spring', which captured much global attention in 2011, has posed new questions and challenges. On the positive side are the historic, often nonviolent mass-mobilisations for change, giving inspiration to young people and nascent social movements around the world. Governments have struggled to find effective policies of engagement in the face of the removal of their bilateral partners and the collapse of the state. In Libya, where a Protection of Civilians mandate was used to justify military intervention by NATO, nevertheless it was regime change that proved the dominant policy. Unusually, it was AU governments who were advocating for dialogue and engagement.

Trends where we work: countries and regions

The relationship between peace and conflict fluctuates in the evolving dynamics of the particular conflicts where we work. As a result, all of our programmes have to be informed by processes of analytical renewal in order to ensure that we are responding to current needs and the factors that sustain conflicts today, which are often not the same factors that generated conflict in the first place.

Beyond the elites

While different factors drive conflicts, in each of the regions where we work we observe trends

4. As above, p.6

that inform how we design our involvement. We are conscious that peace processes and especially negotiations frequently remain the preserve of elites, who are often divorced from societies-at-large. Whether it is the Minsk Process in regard to Nagorny Karabakh, the International Contact Group (ICG) supporting talks between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or the first steps to establishing a road map to guide a process of constitutional renewal in Fiji, each process requires support to articulate and integrate voices and insights from the whole of society, including hitherto excluded perspectives.

Beyond the likeminded

The struggle to promote participation and integrate wider perspectives is matched by the importance of engaging with armed groups or unrecognised authorities, and not just working with those who are likeminded. The challenges are different according to country or region. In East and Central Africa, the LRA has continued its pattern of attacks and abductions across CAR, DRC and South Sudan, yet communities demand political solutions – that imply engagement – and not just military responses. In the Caucasus, addressing the tension between strategies of isolation and engagement in regard to the authorities in Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabakh poses different challenges.

Rights respecting solutions

But in these and other diverse contexts, a key question is how to promote political solutions that respect rights. This requires consideration of the relationship between governance and peacebuilding. We are conscious that the states in which we work are bedevilled by an array of challenges, and we have to continue to retain the integrity of our focus, so that we are working on issues of direct relevance to peace and conflict and do not drift into the much wider issues at stake. There is always more work than one organisation can hope to do, therefore it is imperative that we focus our energies on the way in which issues such as dysfunctional governance impacts on the search for peace, rather than being drawn into efforts to remedy governance writ large.

Opportunities

Viewed from a critical distance, the opportunities for progress in the different contexts in which we work are varied.

In the Philippines, the innovative operation of the ICG is contributing to a positive contextual dynamic for peace.

In Colombia, the protracted conflict cannot disguise demands for new paradigms for peacemaking (despite the continued dimension of military action as a tool).

In East Central Africa, the focus to date on military approaches threatens to drown out political dimensions, but space for civic engagement offers modest alternatives.

In Kashmir, violence persists but it is of a qualitatively reduced order to previous periods of militancy, yet the space for a political solution remains negligible, despite a recognition that confidence building measures could contribute to a changed environment.

In West Africa, the path of transition in the Mano River Union continues to be plagued by immense developmental challenges and fragile democratic processes, while porous borders generate insecurity. Here, conflict-prevention agendas at present seem more realistic than transformative ones.

In the Caucasus, there is a danger that intractability may contaminate the architecture of peace processes and make it difficult for the parties to envisage constructive change. This demands a reassessment of what peace could bring and a reinvigoration of the processes to get there.

While in Fiji, the lack of external leverage over a military government should not distract from the creative efforts of local civil society in promoting dialogue that could contribute to a return to constitutional order.

Trends in policy and practice

We commented above on the trend towards increased international activism around conflict and peacebuilding. It is worth reflecting on particular elements of that trend:

Increasing professionalisation

The number of individuals and organisations at all levels (NGOs, governments, and international organisations) involved in peacebuilding and peacemaking is steadily increasing, bringing both opportunities

and risks. The field is becoming more professionalised, but also more mainstream – perhaps losing some of the earlier focus on the transformation of conflict, which is where CR has its roots. The growing number of actors means a much greater number of institutions that profess both legitimacy and competence, and that we might wish to influence. CR has to continue to develop and reinforce its position in that broader landscape.

Mediation and peace processes

There have been interesting developments in the field of mediation and peace processes. At a policy level, this has included the publication of the UN Secretary General's report on preventative diplomacy, and the establishment in late 2010 of the Group of Friends of mediation. At a practice level, we have seen moves towards more inclusive and innovative forms of peace processes, such as the ICG in the Philippines, of which CR is a part.

Governance and development

The links between conflict and the lack of development are now well recognised: that conflict is a significant obstacle to development and improving well being; and that good, participatory and inclusive development is a long-term mechanism for conflict prevention. But the analysis of conflict by external actors often remains weak: truly conflict sensitive approaches are still the exception. An international system still dominated by the nation-state imposes its own limitations on engagement with non-state actors, including armed groups, quasi-governmental authorities such as in Palestine, and (largely) unrecognised authorities such as Abkhazia.

Cross-border approaches

Conciliation Resources broke conceptual ground with our Accord 22 on cross-border peacebuilding, and we are seeing these themes developed elsewhere. Organisations such as the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support are interested in systemic approaches to conflict resolution. Regional organisations such as the Regional Economic Communities in Africa are becoming increasingly engaged in peace and conflict issues. International organisations such as the UN, the EU and many Western governments are increasingly adopting regional strategies and cross-border approaches to conflict, including support infrastructure such as regional offices.

Public participation

Whilst the value of public participation has been explicitly acknowledged in development discourse, it is increasingly recognised in conversations around conflict, in terms of the increased legitimacy and efficacy that it confers on peacemaking processes. However, in many places we are also observing a shrinking of the space available for civil society activism, as increasing numbers of governments deploy the language and justifications of 'counter-terrorism' towards activity perceived as oppositional or 'anti-state'.

Engaging with armed groups

The past few years have seen significant developments in both policy and practice on engaging with armed groups. Terrorism legislation and proscription regimes have in many instances reduced the political space for engagement, although this has recently started to open a little again. In 2011, the UN lists on Al Qaeda and the Taleban were split in an attempt to ease engagement with the Taleban in Afghanistan, and the US allowed a small opening of political space for humanitarian engagement with Al Shabaab in Somalia. The international agenda on terrorism has been moving slowly towards a greater emphasis on 'root causes' alongside enforcement, bringing it closer to a peacebuilding-type approach.

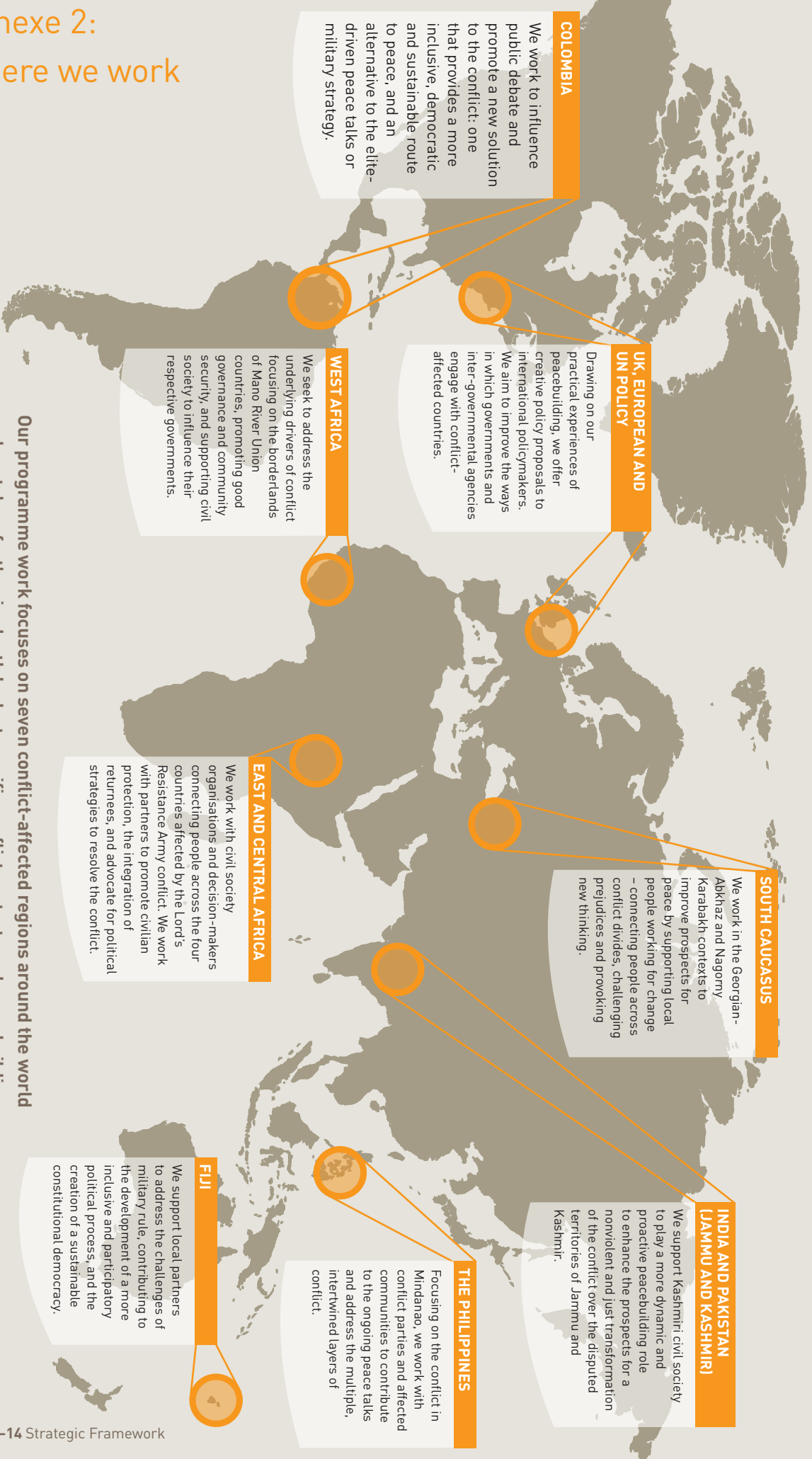
New and emerging actors: global dynamics

We continue to observe changes in the global balance of power, and the 'emerging powers' are playing new and increasing roles in global responses to conflict. Regional organisations are also playing more assertive roles, such as the AU in Cote d'Ivoire and the Arab League in Syria. The UN, meanwhile, remains unreformed and risks further undermining its legitimacy when a 'Responsibility to Protect' mandate is used by some member states as cover for effecting regime-change, as in Libya. Recent financial crises in Europe and North America have both limited the financial resources and enthusiasm available to invest in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These crises have led to a reduction in the influence of the global North, and new and emerging actors have different views and considerations towards conflict, peacebuilding and power.

Significant policy developments in the early 2010s

There have been some significant recent policy developments in areas of interest for CR. The *World Development Report 2011* emphasised, among other things, the changing nature of conflict and violence, and the importance of long-term investment in building resilient institutions. In the UK, the British government issued two significant statements of policy: the Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2010 and the subsequent Building Stability Overseas Strategy of 2011. And the EU is making slow progress towards addressing conflict as part of its common foreign and security policy, with the External Action Service established in January 2011, including dedicated teams on peace and conflict issues. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding & Statebuilding has continued its work and ensured issues of conflict and fragility were firmly included on the agenda of the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in December 2011

Annexe 2: Where we work



Our programme work focuses on seven conflict-affected regions around the world and we take a further in-depth look at specific conflict contexts and peacebuilding themes through our *Accord* publication series. In addition, we work to improve global conflict policies for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with a focus on the UK, EU and UN, and the regions in which we work.

Conciliation Resources is an independent organisation working with people in conflict to prevent violence and build peace. We're there for as long as we're needed to provide advice, support and practical resources. In addition, we take what we learn to government decision-makers and others working to end conflict, to improve peacebuilding policies and practice worldwide.

Together, we can find peaceful alternatives to violence.

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