Young boys in Mogadishu, Somalia. The UK's engagement in fragile states should seek to address the root causes of instability, as well as the symptoms. © SAFERWORLD

PROMOTING LONG-TERM PEACE OVERSEAS: THE ROLE OF THE UK

Engagement in conflict-affected and fragile states has taken an increasingly prominent place in the UK's diplomatic, development, and defence policy and practice overseas. The UK Government has confirmed its commitment to spending 30% of official development assistance (ODA) in conflict-affected states into 2015–16[1] and the National Security Council (NSC) will now increase its oversight of conflict prevention projects across government departments. Going forward, it is crucial that UK engagement in fragile states strives to effectively address not just the symptoms but also the causes of insecurity and violent conflict.

This briefing provides an overview of key areas of UK policy and practice relating to conflict issues. It highlights recommendations for how a conflict prevention approach to overseas engagement might be taken forward, in order to improve the lives of those directly affected by insecurity and violent conflict. This briefing also highlights Saferworld's programming work in conflict-affected or fragile states, illustrating through case studies some practical examples of what conflict prevention activities look like.

Saferworld believes the priority areas of UK policy within the conflict prevention agenda include:

- the UK Building Stability Overseas Strategy
- the Arms Trade Treaty and UK arms export controls
- the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the UK's work on gender, peace and security
- the debate over the 'securitisation of aid'
- and the UK's role in promoting peace as part of the global development framework to follow the Millennium Development Goals after 2015.

BUILDING STABILITY OVERSEAS

The 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) is the UK Government's cross-departmental policy framework to address instability and violence overseas. Jointly owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and the Department for International Development (DFID), the BSOS marks a shift in how the UK views 'stability' in the wake of the Arab Spring, towards a more progressive vision based on the consent of the population (see Box 1).

Upstream conflict prevention

Saferworld has strongly welcomed the BSOS focus on 'upstream conflict prevention', which we understand to mean adopting a long-term, coordinated approach that seeks to understand and respond to the underlying causes of conflict and instability before they result in violence.[2]

This third pillar of BSOS (the first two pillars are 'Early warning' and 'Rapid crisis prevention and response') has the potential to be one of the strategy's most significant contributions to increasing the positive impacts of UK overseas engagement, ultimately improving the lives of people in communities affected by instability. In order to maximise this potential, officials across the MoD, FCO, and DFID will need to understand and buy into the idea of upstream conflict prevention and prioritise it in their work.

Mainstreaming the BSOS

The BSOS provides a strong starting point for increasing the effectiveness of UK engagement on conflict issues, but implementation will require a real shift in practice towards this progressive vision across the UK's work in conflict-affected or fragile states.

Considerable progress has been made to set up the structures needed for BSOS implementation.[3] However, strong integration of the BSOS policy elements, such as the progressive vision of 'stability', must be prioritised across the work of the three departments and in all UK engagement in conflict-affected states for implementation to be meaningful.

BOX 1 BSOS DEFINITION OF 'STABILITY'

The BSOS characterises **'stability'** in terms of "political systems which are representative and legitimate, capable of managing conflict and change peacefully, and societies in which human rights are respected, basic needs are met, security established and opportunities for social and economic development are open to all". It suggests that this type of **'structural stability'** is "built on the consent of the population, is resilient and flexible in the face of shocks, and can evolve over time as the context changes".[4]

In addition, the replacement of the tri-departmental Conflict Pool by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) in 2015–16[5] will need to be accompanied by a strong articulation of how this vision of 'stability' and a commitment to upstream conflict prevention will be prioritised by the National Security Council (NSC) in setting the Fund's direction. The NSC will need to make clear how it will integrate the BSOS principles into the CSSF's mechanisms and how these commitments will be observed by each department represented in the Council.

"Every context is different and presents its own set of challenges; there is no 'one size fits all' approach to preventing or resolving conflict."

Responding to context

Every context is different and presents its own set of challenges; there is no 'one size fits all' approach to preventing or resolving conflict. Effective UK engagement in conflict-affected states will therefore require responses to be based on a thorough conflict assessment and overall sensitivity to local conflict dynamics across UK interventions.

The BSOS commits to establishing methodology for joint conflict assessments, known as the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Security (JACS), to help department staff design context-specific responses to peace and security challenges. The JACS demonstrates progress towards a comprehensive joined-up approach, and several have been carried out in-country. However, their value must be measured on whether this analysis meaningfully informs all types of UK engagement, beyond specific peace-building programming, in practice. To be effective, content must be relevant, regularly updated and based on consultations that extend beyond the UK Government to gain the valuable perspectives of those operating on the ground, particularly civil society.

Applying the BSOS

For implementation to be meaningful, interactions including trade, aid, diplomacy, and defence must contribute to building peace in the long term. For instance, 2013 annual report of the Committees on Arms Export Controls (CAEC)[6] highlighted a contradiction between the UK Government's commitments to preventing conflict and protecting human rights on the one hand, and its arms export practices on the other, indicating a lack of coordination and consistency in the Government's approach. It is essential that real effort is made to adopt the 'whole of government approach'[7] mentioned in the BSOS, where all departments are contributing to and working towards peace, security, and stability overseas.

A child plays with an old artillery piece in Mogadishu, Somalia. The UK can help build stability for communities affected by violence and insecurity by taking a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention. © MOHAMED AMIN JIBRIL/IRIN

ABOUT SAFERWORLD

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from insecurity and violent conflict.

We are a not-for-profit organisation that works in over 20 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and Europe.

www.saferworld.org.uk

Recommendations

THE UK GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- Clarify how the National Security Council (NSC) will mainstream BSOS principles and promote implementation under the new Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund

- Ensure conflict analyses (JACS) are conducted and updated regularly by in-country officials and meaningfully inform engagement across departments

- Ensure that all overseas engagements are seen through a conflict prevention lens.

PARLIAMENTARIANS SHOULD:

- Table regular debates and questions on conflict prevention to hold the Government to account on BSOS commitments

- Provide scrutiny of the Conflict Pool and the new Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund to ensure that BSOS principles guide NSC priorities for conflict prevention.

SAFERWORLD
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

Conflict and insecurity affect women, men, boys, and girls differently and this shapes the dynamics of conflict. In addressing conflict issues, there is a need to consider that social norms and practices around gender often play a part in what is driving conflict; and understanding gender dynamics can also highlight pathways to peace. It is therefore important for the UK to adopt a gender perspective when designing policy and programmes in conflict-affected states in order to effectively account for and address conflict dynamics.

The UK has increased its focus on tackling violence against women in conflict-affected states in recent years, for real change in this area it is also necessary to address wider gender, peace and security issues, such as through supporting the full participation of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

> **"The UK Government … must prioritise prevention by investing resources in tackling the root causes of both armed conflict and sexual and gender-based violence."**

Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative

The UK's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI), launched in May 2012, sets out the Government's plan to tackle the culture of impunity that surrounds sexual violence in conflict. This was followed by a concerted UK effort to create international momentum to take action on this issue. The resulting G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict in April 2013 and the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 2106 on ending rape and sexual violence in conflict in June present major opportunities to make a difference to those affected. However, they must be more than just pieces of paper. The UK and other G8 states must be transparent

BOX 2   TAKING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ON CONFLICT

The UK NAP commits to adopting a 'gender perspective' in the UK Government work in conflict-affected states. However, it does not elaborate on what that should mean in practice. There is a risk that 'gender' will be seen as synonymous with 'women', meaning half of the picture is left out.

Supporting women's rights in conflict-affected countries and their participation in peace processes is vital and often neglected. However, it is also important to consider the role of men as *men* in these contexts. For example, cultural associations between masculinity and violence can be used to encourage men to take up arms, making conflicts more likely to escalate into violence. In South Sudan, for instance, violent cattle raiding is a product of political, social, and economic factors in which traditional male and female roles and expectations play an important part. The payment of bride price in cattle, combined with a close cultural association between masculinity and armed violence, can encourage young men to take part in cattle raids which often lock communities into cycles of revenge.[8]

A mainstreamed gender approach should consider how conflict, insecurity, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention activities impact on and are influenced by women, men, boys, and girls. In particular, it should analyse how socially constructed gender norms can ease or exacerbate conflict, violence, and insecurity, or ways in which gender roles can affect participation in peacebuilding and public life. In order for UK officials working in conflict-affected states to structure UK responses that help to address the underlying causes of conflict, it is important to fully understand gender norms and roles in the context in which they are operating.

about what they are doing to implement these agreements to ensure that real progress is made.

While Saferworld commends the UK Government's leadership on pursuing prosecutions of those responsible for sexual violence in conflict, it must also prioritise prevention by investing resources in tackling the root causes of both armed conflict and sexual and gender-based violence. Only then can a long-term, holistic approach that addresses gender-based violence in all contexts take effect.

UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

The UK National Action Plan (NAP) for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is a cross-departmental initiative to address the impact of conflict on women and girls and support women's full and equal participation in conflict prevention and resolution.

In order to fulfil this objective, the NAP, which will be revised for 2014, will need to set out a plan for mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the UK's broader conflict prevention work (see Box 2). It is therefore important that all MoD, FCO, and DFID officials working on conflict issues are fully aware of the NAP, have an understanding of what it means to take a gender perspective, and are issued with practical guidance on how to conduct and act on gender analyses in conflict-affected states. Systematic gender analysis should be included in all of the UK's conflict analyses in order that gender considerations are meaningfully integrated into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of conflict prevention activities.

The current NAP expires in November 2013 and is being redeveloped for the launch of the 2014–17 NAP in March 2014. This provides a valuable opportunity to incorporate lessons learnt from the

Participants at a workshop in Alexandria, Egypt, as part of Saferworld's strengthening women's voices project. Consultation with women in the region has highlighted the need to address women's security as a barrier to their political participation.
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previous NAP, strengthen guidance for implementation, and put the perspectives and voices of women directly affected by conflict at the heart of the NAP's objectives.

Recommendations

THE UK GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- **Ensure that the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative invests resources in addressing the root causes of sexual violence, not just prosecuting perpetrators**
- **Provide mandatory gender, peace, and security training for all government officials working on conflict issues and include gender mainstreaming objectives in job descriptions and performance objectives**
- **Ensure that gender, peace, and security objectives are integrated into other government strategies and plans on both conflict and gender, for example, DFID's Strategic Vision for Women and Girls**
- **Include gender analyses within conflict analyses for all conflict-affected and fragile countries where the UK is engaged.**

PARLIAMENTARIANS SHOULD:

- **Monitor progress on the development of the new National Action Plan on women, peace, and security**
- **Ensure attention is paid in parliament to the implementation of the National Action Plan throughout the UK's engagement with conflict-affected and fragile states**
- **Push for the UK Government to report on gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention activities and the participation of women in peace processes.**

BOX 3
SUPPORTING WOMEN ACTIVISTS IN EGYPT, LIBYA, AND YEMEN

In 2012 Saferworld established a regional project to strengthen women's public voice on security issues in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. In the wake of the Arab Spring protests, the escalation of insecurity has had a particular impact on women. They are being systematically and violently targeted as a way to force them out of public spaces, largely due to expectations about traditional gender roles. A broader rise in crime also serves to restrict their mobility. Both of these issues reduce women's ability to be politically active in public much more sharply than men's. The project has pursued three main objectives: to conduct and disseminate research on the way women's safety and security concerns are affecting their political participation, to strengthen networks between women activists, and to increase their level of engagement with national and international policymakers.

With our regional project partners, Saferworld has conducted consultations with hundreds of women across Egypt, Libya, and Yemen to investigate women's perceptions of insecurity in the transitions and the ways in which insecurity affects their ability to participate in public life. The research has generated a unique evidence base on an issue increasingly recognised as being of crucial importance to the transitions in all three countries.

Saferworld has also brought together more than 120 women activists from Egypt, Libya, and Yemen and facilitated access to policymakers through regional and national roundtables. We helped to establish new contacts between the participants, provided advocacy training, and promoted ties between participants and policymakers through roundtables in Yemen and Egypt, a conference in Libya, and a regional policy meeting in Cairo.

As a result of these new contacts and initiatives, cooperation within the project's 'Our Voice, Our Strength' Network has emerged. Several organisations have jointly initiated work on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and campaigns against sexual harassment. Network participants are also individually more visible on the issue of women's security. Though major challenges remain, our regional project is helping to highlight the importance of this issue on local, national, and international stages. Failing to address the security concerns of women and men alike could seriously undermine the transitional period in the region, as well as the legitimacy and representativeness of the institutions and political systems that emerge from it.

REGULATING THE ARMS TRADE

As one of the world's largest arms exporters, the UK has a responsibility to implement the highest standards of arms transfer controls and to ensure that its arms exports are not used to fuel armed conflict, internal repression, or human rights violations. Despite the comprehensiveness of the UK's existing arms control systems, questions around the consistency of their application and their capacity to respond to changing international circumstances means that there is still some concern about the impact of UK exports on international peace and security.

UK arms transfer controls

During the last decade the UK Government has overhauled its arms transfer control legislation with the 2002 Export Control Act (implemented by the 2008 Export Control Order) providing the basis for UK arms export, import, transit, transhipment, and brokering controls. The UK is also bound by the European Union (EU) Common Position on Arms Exports which elaborates a list of eight criteria, including concerns such as human rights, regional stability, and development, which govern the transfer of conventional arms and related equipment.[9]

"While the UK Government has one of the strongest arms transfer control systems in the world, its implementation has, at times, been called into question."

While the UK Government has one of the strongest arms transfer control systems in the world, its implementation has, at times, been called into question. This was particularly so in the wake of the Arab Spring, where weapons were sold by the UK and other European governments to authoritarian regimes who then used armed force against their own people. This led to scores of UK export licences issued to countries such as Libya and

Egypt being revoked during the first half of 2011.

The UK Government declared its intention to learn the lessons from the Arab Spring; thus far this has amounted to very little in the way of substantive change.[10] Moreover, the UK Government has continued to prioritise the promotion of UK defence and security exports,[11] with both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence[12] active in support of prospective arms deals with countries of concern, including in the Middle East. Saferworld is concerned that by continuing to promote significant arms sales to an already heavily armed and unstable region, the UK Government is prioritising economic interests over the promotion of human rights, good governance, and wider conflict prevention efforts.

These concerns are reinforced by evidence in the 2013 annual report of the Committees on Arms Export Controls (CAEC) which shows that export licences for strategic controlled goods worth more than £12 billion were issued for countries on the FCO's list of countries of human rights concern.[13] Moreover, the disclosure in July and August 2013 that the UK Government suspended a significant number of export licences for military equipment destined for Egypt strongly suggests that the lessons of the Arab Spring have yet to be fully learned (see Box 4).

Arms Trade Treaty

The need for the UK Government to show leadership in exercising responsibility and restraint in its conventional arms controls was further highlighted by the key role it played in the adoption, at the UN General Assembly on 2 April 2013, of an international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The historic adoption of the ATT was the culmination of nearly 20 years of hard work and cooperation between civil society, progressive governments, and supportive parliamentarians. It now sets an important basis for global action to control the conventional arms trade and thus to reduce violent conflict and armed

VOTING FIGURES FOR THE ARMS TRADE TREATY UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2 APRIL 2013[*]

22 abstained

3 voted against

155 voted in favour
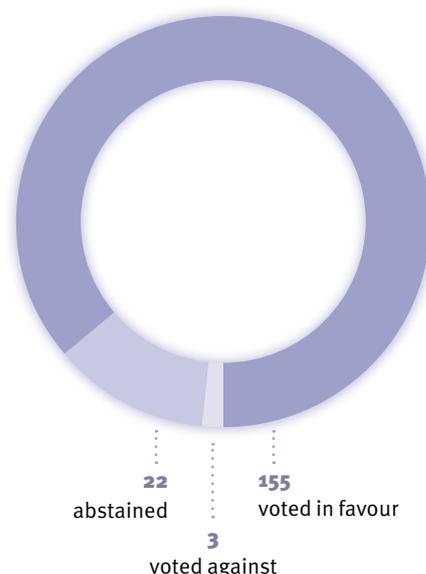
[*] Angola mistakenly abstained on the day of voting, but amended its vote soon after to give this final tally.

violence by establishing a global standard against which states parties can be held accountable.

However, the future impact of the ATT will depend upon the Treaty being signed, ratified, and fully implemented by as many states as possible. Given that the UK Government played a vital leadership role in achieving the ATT, it is now more important than ever that the UK leads by example in the implementation of rigorous arms transfer controls, thereby helping to ensure that the Treaty starts life on the strongest possible footing.
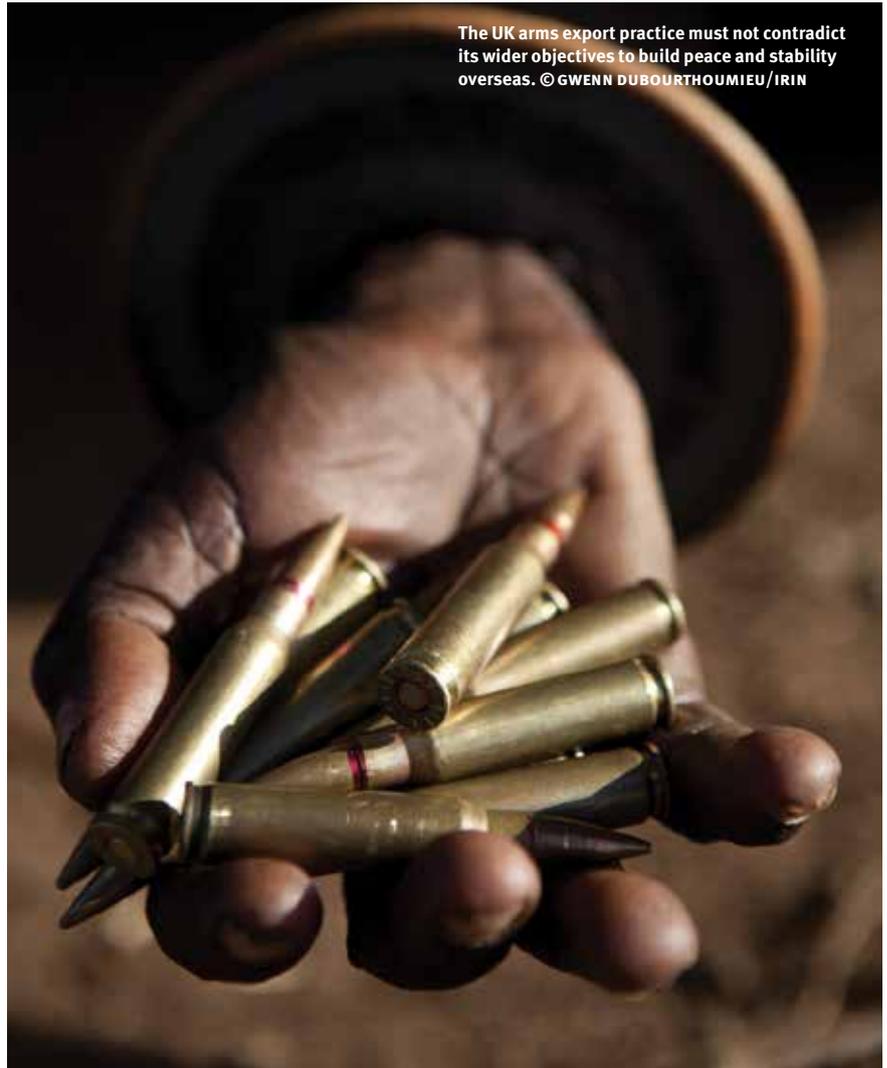
Recommendations

THE UK GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- **Demonstrate lessons learned following the Arab Spring by ensuring that conflict prevention, human rights, good governance, and building structural stability are at the forefront of any decision to authorise arms exports**
- **Ensure that consideration of potential economic benefits from arms transfers does not undermine arms export decision making processes**
- **Set a high standard for Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) implementation by making a strong interpretive statement upon ratification of the ATT**
- **Encourage other states, especially those with which it has defence relationships, to sign, ratify, and fully implement the ATT**
- **Provide assistance to other states to improve their export control systems so that they are able to implement the ATT fully.**

PARLIAMENTARIANS SHOULD:

- **Table annual parliamentary debates to assess the Government's progress on implementing the ATT**
- **Ensure scrutiny of arms export licenses granted by the Government against UK export controls, the European Union Common Position on Arms Exports, and the ATT**
- **Hold the Government accountable for any decisions on arms exports to authoritarian regimes that could pose risks of internal of regional instability or regional stability and conflict.**

The UK arms export practice must not contradict its wider objectives to build peace and stability overseas. © GWENN DUBOURTHOUMIEU/IRIN

BOX 4 LEARNING LESSONS ON UK ARMS EXPORTS

When the Arab Spring erupted at the end of 2010, the UK Government defended its arms exports to the region, arguing that these countries were 'not unstable' at the time that export licences were issued. However, the July and August 2013 suspension of UK licences to Egypt after the overthrow of President Morsi suggests that the lessons from the Arab Spring of supplying arms to unstable regimes have not been fully learned.

The 2013 report of the UK parliamentary Committees on Arms Export Controls (CAEC), which raised questions about licences for arms exports to countries on the FCO's list of 'countries of human rights concern', flagged Egypt as an additional problematic destination even before the civil unrest of July 2013. The report listed existing standard licences worth over £59 million for exports of equipment to Egypt. This included more than £4 million worth of small arms, ammunition, and components, as well as body armour and components for combat vehicles. In addition, there were 47 'open' licences which place no limit on the scale of exports and include a wide range of equipment such as heavy machine guns, small arms and missiles and components and equipment for fast attack craft. The extent of these continuing arms exports suggests that, despite any procedural and rhetorical improvements, very little has changed when it comes to decisions about arms exports to Egypt. The UK Government must urgently review its approach to assessing the risk that arms might be misused, ensuring that conflict prevention, human rights, good governance, and building structural stability are at the forefront of any decision to authorise arms exports.

SECURITISATION OF AID?

Saferworld firmly believes that addressing the root causes of conflict and meeting poor people's security needs are legitimate uses of UK aid. Recent debates around aid spending by the military has raised concern that aid might be used to further UK security interests over those of aid recipients, which Saferworld understands to be at the centre of the 'securitisation of aid' debate. Saferworld believes that aid should always be used to meet the needs of the poorest, but care should be taken not to undermine the recognition that poor peoples' access to security and justice are basic development needs in their own right.

This debate highlights the pressing need to better define the role of defence in contributing to shared UK conflict prevention objectives, and for mainstream development actors to better explore and address the security needs of communities with which they work.

The role for defence in preventing conflict

Debate over the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) delivered by the MoD prior to the 2013 Spending Review raised questions about the role that defence might play in contributing to development.

While the UK Government has since reiterated its commitment both to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on aid, and importantly that ODA will be spent in line with the Office of Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) guidelines and the UK's International Development Act (2002), there is a need to adequately address outstanding concerns around the MoD's role in its delivery.

The MoD, in its International Defence Engagement Strategy[14], states its intention to contribute to joint governmental objectives, including helping prevent conflict and providing security overseas in line with the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS). Nevertheless, the strategy falls short of articulating an overall vision for how defence intends to contribute

to upstream conflict prevention (particularly given the tension between its role in conflict prevention on the one hand and promoting UK arms exports on the other), giving the impression of a lack of commitment to the approach outlined in the BSOS overall. To achieve the full impact of commitments in the BSOS, all three departments must together prioritise a coordinated approach to conflict prevention, requiring the MoD to make clear how its overall defence engagement will work towards shared BSOS objectives.

> "To achieve the full impact of commitments in the BSOS, all three departments must together prioritise a coordinated approach to conflict prevention."

It is important to recognise that the defence community has a distinct role to play in contributing to conflict prevention, in line with their unique skills and capabilities.[15] Some ideas for what this might look like include: supporting security and justice sector reform; defence transformation; small arms counter-proliferation; the demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration of combatants; as well as monitoring the implementation of arms transfer control arrangements through Defence Attachés or other defence engagement.

People's security

Likewise, it is important that the wider UK development community recognises its role in addressing the safety and security of poor people, alongside other development objectives. Security is not something 'security actors', such as police or armed forces, can deliver alone; development actors also have the opportunity to help to promote people's safety and security through their programming.

Saferworld believes that the process of identifying and solving local security issues should be owned and led by communities directly affected by insecurity. Saferworld has developed a 'community security' methodology that works with communities to identify and define their own security problems, and develop appropriate solutions to them (see Box 5).[16] In doing so, we help to make sustainable improvements to people's experiences of safety and security, which in turn can impact positively on other areas of their lives such as health, education, and livelihoods.

Recommendations

THE UK GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

■ **Ensure that engagement to protect UK national security interests is consistent with efforts to promote the security and development needs of communities living in fragile states**

■ **Articulate how the Ministry of Defence (MoD) contributes to the pillars of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) – particularly to upstream conflict prevention – in its engagement in conflict affected and fragile states**

■ **Support development actors to address people's security and justice needs in their work.**

PARLIAMENTARIANS SHOULD:

■ **Provide formal parliamentary scrutiny of cross-departmental BSOS implementation, including of the MoD**

■ **Push for clarification of the role of the MoD in conflict prevention when engaging in conflict-affected and fragile states**

■ **Using timely interventions, articulate the validity of using Official Development Assistance to meet poor people's security and justice needs.**

Women discuss their security concerns as part of a focus group discussion for Saferworld's community security project in Bangladesh. By supporting communities to address their safety and security concerns, UK actors can help to sustain other areas of development such as education, sanitation, and livelihoods.
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BOX 5 SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS SECURITY IN BANGLADESH

Saferworld's community security projects demonstrate how aid can be used to help address people's security and safety concerns. A community security approach is about helping to make sustainable improvements to people's experiences of safety and security. It is both about the end state – where communities feel safe and secure – and the process by which communities are helped to identify and address their own security needs. Many of the communities Saferworld works with have linked local security problems to development issues such as water and sanitation, education, public health and increased political participation, as well as concerns around security provision.

For instance, in three villages in Kishoreganj, Bangladesh, Saferworld and local partner BRAC helped to set up community action committees made up of local residents to discuss safety and security issues and find solutions to them. Sexual harassment of women and girls was identified as a priority concern. The committees planned a series of

activities to address this issue, including: raising awareness of the effects of sexual harassment against women and girls, challenging the perpetrators of sexual harassment, and improving cooperation with the police. The action committees, along with local youth and women's groups, held a series of public events and group discussions to raise awareness of the negative consequences of sexual harassment, such as causing girls to drop out of school, their fear of bathing in the river and moving about freely. In addition, the groups directly challenged sexual harassment by approaching the men who were seen to harass women and girls, again explaining the consequences and asking them to stop. The action committees also worked with the police to establish 'crime maps', monitoring and recording locations where men would often harass women. The police used this information to direct foot patrols and on occasion prevent sexual harassment from taking place.[17]

As a result of the action committees'

activities, local residents reported that sexual harassment had reduced dramatically, and young women in particular said that they felt much more confident in attending school. The construction of bathing shelters also allowed them to feel safer. The project motivated and mobilised communities to actively address further security concerns, and helped to build their capacity to do so. It also demonstrated the value of community – police relations and that listening to community concerns is key to finding solutions to local security issues. For the women and girls of Kishoreganj's villages, insecurity formed a barrier to their school attendance, use of sanitation facilities, and freedom of movement, preventing them from earning a living and safely going about their daily lives. This project illustrates the importance of addressing communities' safety and security concerns both as an objective in its own right, and as a prerequisite for development.[18]

INCLUDING PEACE IN THE POST-2015 GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

It has been increasingly recognised that conflict and insecurity form some of the most significant barriers to development – and that the framework that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they expire in 2015 will need to address these issues if it is to be successful.[19] The UK has been a key champion of the need to address the challenges posed by conflict and insecurity both in their own right, and as part of an overall approach to sustainable development within this 'post-2015' process.

High Level Panel Report and beyond

The report from the UN High Level Panel,[20] co-chaired by the UK Prime Minister, on the post-2015 development framework was published in June 2013 and sets out a progressive vision for including peace in the post-2015 agenda, highlighting peace as one of five 'transformative shifts' needed for a new development paradigm. The High Level Panel calls for the world "to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of well-being, not optional extras".[21]

The report addresses perceived gaps within the current MDGs relating to conflict, violence, the rule of law, and good governance, and identifies illustrative goals on stable and peaceful societies, and good governance and effective institutions, for any future framework. Significantly, it recognises that peace is a cross-cutting issue that will need to be addressed throughout the development agenda for there to be real change. Those designing the new framework must now build on this foundation and work to define targets relevant to peacebuilding more clearly and develop credible indicators to measure them.

The UK played an instrumental role in ensuring the High Level Panel recognised peace as a cornerstone for sustainable development, as part of the Prime Minister's 'golden thread' of successful development, which includes the absence of conflict and corruption and the presence of the rule of law.[22] Encouragingly, the report goes beyond 'absence of conflict' alone and recognises that positive peace – such as respect for human rights, participatory politics, accountability, and transparency – can contribute to development and poverty eradication. As we move into the next stages of the post-2015 process at the UN, the UK must now continue its work to build support from other states to see a development framework that strives towards and is underpinned by peace and security for all social groups.

The role of 'rising powers'

The UK, with its diplomatic reach, can help to encourage collective commitment by governments around the world to ensure that peace and security do not fall off the development agenda. In particular, 'rising powers' such as Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Turkey will be key in the process to develop and agree on a credible and effective post-2015 framework. These countries feature ever more prominently in the world of development and are increasingly engaged in conflict-affected states.

Saferworld's research has shown that rising powers have diverse perspectives on the relationship between development and peacebuilding.[23] Their active participation in the post-2015 process, and efforts to constructively address their concerns, is vital for reaching international consensus on targets to address violence and conflict in the new development framework.

Recommendations

THE UK GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- Work with other supportive governments and civil society to ensure that goals and targets in the UN High Level Panel's report related to peace and good governance are prioritised for inclusion in the final framework

- Make use of its international embassy network and broad international influence to encourage other states to champion the inclusion of peace and security issues in the intergovernmental process towards 2015. Special attention should be placed on engaging with southern states and rising powers.

PARLIAMENTARIANS SHOULD:

- Table questions and debates to ensure that DFID is prioritising the inclusion of peace in its work on post-2015

- Work with parliamentarians in other states to build political support for the inclusion of goals and targets on sustainable peace in the post-2015 development framework.

BOX 6 PEACE IN THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL REPORT

The High Level Panel report, *A new global partnership*, represents an important step forward with its recognition of the need to 'build peace and effective, open, accountable institutions for all'. This includes:

- peace as one of five 'transformative shifts' needed for sustainable development

- goal 10 on good governance and effective institutions

- goal 11 on ensuring stable and peaceful societies

- nine corresponding targets to contribute to lasting peace and violence reduction.

The report also attempts to integrate peace as a cross-cutting issue, with goals and targets on other areas needed for sustainable peace. For instance, it includes targets on addressing violence against women and girls, on political voice and freedoms, and on issues of equitable access to services. Crucially, this is underpinned by a call for indicators on progress towards these goals to be disaggregated so that no social group is left behind.[24]

Local boys with tyre in Kuajok, South Sudan. As a growing development actor, and a key participant in the post-2015 process, China must consider the impact of its engagement in South Sudan and other conflict-affected and fragile states. © SAFERWORLD/THOMAS MARTIN

BOX 7 CHINA IN SOUTH SUDAN: TOWARDS A CONFLICT-SENSITIVE APPROACH

China's emergence as an increasingly influential development actor may have significant implications on the post-2015 process, particularly on the inclusion of peace, as China uses its development experience to inform its position on the new framework. China's engagement in Africa has been based on a policy of 'non-interference' that has seen Chinese governmental and commercial actors separate issues of peace and security from development or economic cooperation, avoiding engagement on conflict issues except where vital interests are at stake.[25]

However, growing concerns over risks to its investments and the safety of Chinese citizens based in Africa have highlighted the need for Chinese actors to recognise the impact of their interventions on conflict dynamics and to acknowledge how long-term peace can help safeguard Chinese interests and sustain development in the region.

In the case of South Sudan, a volatile and challenging environment for international actors, China's interventions have often been contradictory. For example, in the past it contributed troops to peacekeeping missions in South Sudan, though its arms transfer policy with Sudan exacerbated violence against South Sudanese civilian populations.[26] Likewise, China's economic development assistance and infrastructure investments have the potential to do as much harm as good.[27] Today, as is the case with all international actors, the ways in which Chinese companies operate or the influx of vast resources that are perceived to benefit some groups at the expense of others risks exacerbating pre-existing conflict drivers.[28]

Since September 2012, Saferworld has been facilitating policy research and discussion between Chinese and South Sudanese stakeholders on how China's

economic cooperation in the development, infrastructure, and extractive sectors can be more conflict-sensitive.[29] Through a series of seminars, workshops, and delegation visits with South Sudanese civil society and officials, an understanding has emerged that by taking a more conflict-sensitive approach in South Sudan, the Chinese Government can safely pursue its desired investment opportunities and meet its commitments to support peacebuilding in Africa. For Chinese companies, conflict sensitivity also offers a means to manage risks, protect workers, safeguard investments, and protect their reputations. This growing recognition from China that addressing conflict, violence, and instability is mutually beneficial also has the potential for shifting how China might approach its role as an emerging global development actor.

CONCLUSION

The policy areas and corresponding recommendations in this briefing are offered as a way of enhancing consistency in the ways in which the UK addresses a broad but interrelated set of conflict issues.

The UK has a responsibility to ensure that its work in conflict-affected states is comprehensive and meaningfully contributes to conflict prevention. This engagement must ultimately seek to address the needs of those affected by violence and insecurity, if conflict prevention is to be successful. Effective parliamentary engagement across these key policy areas, concerted effort by the UK Government to ensure a progressive approach to conflict prevention, and cooperation with the wider development community will be needed to build on progress towards achieving lasting peace and successful, sustainable development.

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- *Community-based approaches to safety and security: Lessons from Kosovo, Nepal and Bangladesh*

NOTES

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