



Interpeace

Partners Forum: Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

Summary Report

12 November 2008

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: the broader policy context
- III. Security System Reform, Statebuilding and Peacebuilding: Case Study Guinea-Bissau
- IV. Local Peacebuilding Efforts and Larger Statebuilding Goals: Case Study Liberia
- V. The Role of Non-State Actors in Statebuilding: Case Study Somali Region
- VI. The Peacebuilding-Statebuilding Nexus

Interpeace is an international peacebuilding organization that helps divided and conflicted societies build sustainable peace.

Interpeace focuses on reinforcing local capacities to overcome deep social divisions and to address conflict in non-violent ways.

Interpeace works with local peacebuilding teams, made up of nationals from the country concerned, to facilitate dialogue with all sectors of society (governments, opposition groups, civil society, private sector representatives, diasporas, etc). These dialogue processes enable populations directly affected by conflict to rebuild trust, to define priorities for social, economic and political rehabilitation, to find consensus-based solutions to conflict, and to assist with their implementation.

Interpeace supports 300 local peacebuilders working on 15 programmes in Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe and the Middle East.

**[www.interpeace.org](http://www.interpeace.org)**

Copyright Interpeace 2008

Permission is granted for reproduction and use of these materials. Please acknowledge your source when using the materials and notify Interpeace by email: [info@interpeace.org](mailto:info@interpeace.org)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Partners Forum was to provide a space for reflection on the questions and challenges related to the nexus between peacebuilding and statebuilding. It brought together approximately 35 people from different sectors (governments, UN, EU, NGOs). Participants spoke in their personal capacities.

Key questions to stimulate the debate were:

- *Historically the formation of states has been a conflictual and often violent process; is externally supported state building automatically a more peaceful process? How can it be supported in ways that contribute to social cohesion and peace?*
- *What are the appropriate responsibilities and roles for internal and external actors in peacebuilding and statebuilding? How in practice can members of a society be involved so that the processes and outcomes have strong legitimacy and ownership beyond sections of a national government?*
- *What are the constraints and challenges facing internal and external actors in their peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts?*
- *How can the international community engage in a fragile society when there is no effective state or the state is not trusted (or part of the problem)?*

The discussion was stimulated by case study presentations on certain challenges of state and peacebuilding in:

- **Guinea-Bissau** (Security System Reform, Statebuilding and Peacebuilding)
- **Liberia** (Local Peacebuilding Efforts and Larger State Building Goals )
- **Somali Region** (The Role of Non-State Actors in State Building).<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A thought piece on Interpeace's experience in peacebuilding and statebuilding was produced for the Partners Forum. The paper, "Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. Invitation for reflection: Interpeace's experiences" is available at: [http://www.interpeace.org/images/pdf/interpeace\\_peacebuilding\\_and\\_statebuilding\\_2008\\_think\\_piece.pdf](http://www.interpeace.org/images/pdf/interpeace_peacebuilding_and_statebuilding_2008_think_piece.pdf)

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

The process of 'state formation' has nearly always been a violent one. Statebuilding itself is largely a top-down process – 'democratisation' tends to come slowly. In statebuilding, power relationships are re-shaped, which typically implies that there are "winners" and "losers". The resulting political culture is often – at least for an initial period- one of 'winner takes all'. Having the outward appearances of a 'democratic political system' does not necessarily alter that.

Rebuilding a country after conflict is about far more than repairing damaged buildings and re-establishing public institutions. Fundamentally, it is about rebuilding relationships at all levels, restoring the people's trust and confidence in governance systems and the rule of law, and providing the population with greater hope for the future. A state, after all, is not only institutions and legal frameworks, but the relationship that is established between these and society.

Both the re-establishment of institutions and legal frameworks, and the development of legitimacy and trust around them, are critical to the consolidation of peace and security in fragile post-conflict situations. When either is neglected, the threat of conflict re-emerging is very real. Statebuilding and peacebuilding are potentially contradictory processes – the former requiring the consolidation of governmental authority (with unavoidable "winners" and "losers"), the latter involving its moderation through compromise and consensus.

The challenge is not just to build or rebuild a functioning state. The key questions are: what sort of state and above all, whose state

Statebuilding and peacebuilding are not separate but complementary fields. Unless there is no objection to the development of states that rely on coercion for governance, statebuilding needs to be undertaken through a peacebuilding lens. And unless we want to risk the disappearance of peacebuilding achievements overtime, it needs institutionalization. The challenge for both national and international peacemakers is to situate reconciliation firmly within the context of state-building, while employing state-building as a platform for the development of mutual trust and lasting reconciliation.

That means that statebuilders constantly have to ask key questions:

- Who wins and who loses in different options?
- How to proceed so that action builds rather than erodes trust?
- Who needs to be involved to make the process legitimate and create broad enough social and political support?
- Who is best placed to facilitate what process: what role for which internal and which external actor; what role for which state and which non-state actor?
- Is there strong and growing local ownership of the process and its outcomes?
- Can a certain option actually be sowing the seeds of future resentment and possible conflict?
- Are solutions offered and pursued based on compromise or even consensus?

Starting from statebuilding to get to peacebuilding is not the same as starting from peacebuilding to get to state building.

At the same time it can be argued that statebuilding and peacebuilding are separate pathways. They have different objectives, will follow different trajectories and will certainly operate at different speeds. The issue of speed is important: there is typically urgency, certainly among external and internal actors, to see a functioning state in place. But genuine peacebuilding takes time – it is a social process that needs to be translated into how a society structures and governs itself. That doesn't happen quickly. More accelerated 'statebuilding' may bring 'stabilisation' which is definitely valuable in itself, but probably not a 'sufficient' condition to achieve durable peace.

While external actors may be able to drive 'accelerated statebuilding', they cannot drive 'accelerated peace building': external actors for example cannot force ordinary Liberians to feel 'Liberian' first or for citizens of a particular country to trust their military-political leaders. The differences in speed may result in statebuilding processes that reinforce existing fault lines and divisions and/or create new ones. That is a risk to be very consciously guarded against.

## I. PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING: THE BROADER POLICY CONTEXT

The Partners Forum sought to provide a contribution to a wider debate and reflection on the question of peacebuilding and statebuilding that has been engaging multiple research and policy circles, including the OECD-DAC.

The topic is also emerging more strongly on the agenda of the 'High Level Forums' on international aid. A 3rd High Level Forum (after Rome in 2003 and Paris in 2005) took place in Accra, Ghana on 2-4 September 2008. Its Round Table 7 focused on fragility and conflict. It was co-chaired by the DRC, the African Development Bank and France with the Netherlands as rapporteur. Interpeace was invited to contribute a short video to the Roundtable, showing citizens perspectives on peacebuilding in Burundi, Palestine and Timor Leste.

A number of observations around Round Table 7 included:

- The relationship between donors and partner countries was characterized as an equal partnership during the preparatory meetings for the Roundtable in Kigali (April 2008) and Kinshasa (July 2008) and at the Roundtable itself.
- The [Kinshasa Statement](#) elaborated at the preparatory meeting in Kinshasa in July 2008 provided the following recommendations:
  - The implementation of the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations be monitored.
  - An international dialogue be launched on objectives for peacebuilding and statebuilding.
  - Joint partner and donor strategic frameworks be strengthened to better integrate peacebuilding and statebuilding with development objectives into national development plans, with appropriate mechanisms to monitor progress.
  - Donor funding modalities be improved, especially for the early recovery phase.
- Roundtable 7 and the overall Accra Agenda for Action took these recommendations further:
  - The implementation of the DAC principles will be monitored jointly by donors and 5 partner countries, namely the DRC, Afghanistan, Timor Leste, the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone. The modalities for this will be further discussed in Paris in December 2008.
  - An international dialogue on peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities and objectives is to be launched at global level between partners and DAC/OECD members led by the DRC and France. The intent is to involve others such as the UN and civil societies in this dialogue. This too will be further discussed at an upcoming meeting in December 2008.
  - Donor countries are encouraged to foster a more integrated or 'Whole of Government' approach, so that their respective policy communities (Diplomacy, Defense and Development) would jointly support peacebuilding and statebuilding. There is an increased recognition that security, stability and poverty reduction challenges are interrelated. The 'Whole of Government Approach' is likely to be further discussed at a meeting in Switzerland in March 2009.
  - How to make funding modalities more rapid and flexible especially in post-conflict situations will be further studied in a working group to be launched in 2009.

Hans Wesseling added to this some reflections from the new Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Unit established this summer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. It is not a purely 'development cooperation' Unit as the Netherlands, like many other countries, consider that 'fragile states' can also become a national and international security concern. One of its objectives is to strive towards stronger and more responsible legitimate government in fragile states, through the stimulation of internal political dialogue and trust building.

A representative from another donor country confirmed the potential 'gap' between the "statebuilders" and the "peacebuilders" within the same administration. They have different backgrounds and 'lenses' (governance / conflict and peace respectively) and may not even be sitting physically in each others' vicinity.

Two questions related to this generally positive policy development concerned international justice and the actual application of any policy related to 'situations of fragility':

- Can international justice mechanisms contribute to peace? For example, the current trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague.
- Does the wider international security concern over 'fragile states' not risk dilution by the engagement of actors whose main objective is containment? The current heightened and enlarged interest in the Somali Region for example, seems to be driven far more by the impact of Somali pirates on shipping trade than by a concern to bring peace and stability to that long-troubled region.

## II. SECURITY SYSTEM REFORM, STATEBUILDING AND PEACEBUILDING: CASE STUDY GUINEA-BISSAU

Security is a precondition for development. It is closely linked to the building and maintenance of the state. In a number of countries, there is a low sense of security because the security forces are unable to meet the security needs of the society, or because they themselves are a source of insecurity.

The framework within which security is considered has evolved in recent years from attention to the 'security sector' to a more comprehensive 'security system' as was discussed by Victoria Walker. This considers not only the 'security forces', typically the army and police, but also other deliverers of security, namely the judiciary and the penal institutions. In addition, there are bodies responsible for the management and oversight of the service providers such as the parliament, ministries, independent commissions, civil society, etc.

The goal is an effective, democratically run and accountable security system that can enhance basic security and justice delivery and provide structural stability – and hence reduce the risk of violence and violent conflict.

The [OECD/DAC Handbook on Security System Reform](#) suggests that external assistance for security system reform should lead to a process and products that are people-centered, locally-owned, based on democratic norms and conform to human rights principles and the rule of law in order to meet the diverse security needs and challenges of the society. The process should also build human and institutional capacities. This means that the appropriate role of external actors is not “to do SSR”, but to support it. Such a comprehensive framework and more process-oriented approach inevitably also imply a longer-term engagement both nationally and with external assistance actors.

How this works out in practice was illustrated and debated through the case of Guinea-Bissau.

### GUINEA-BISSAU

#### 1. Security System Reform is a broader socio-political process.

**Security System Reform in Guinea-Bissau requires more than a predominantly technical-quantitative approach.**

**The specifics of the situation count heavily:**

- Guinea-Bissau is unusual in Africa in that its people already declared independence in 1973, prior to the Anjer-revolution in Portugal (1974) and without international recognition. This was the result of an 11-year long armed struggle. The current armed forces of Guinea-Bissau were then the armed wing of a political movement for independence, which gives them a historical legitimacy that supersedes other sources of legitimacy. The political-military elite that have lived these historical moments, however never had a strong, coherent vision of their own for the future.
- The instability in Guinea-Bissau (12 governments in the 14 years since multi-party democracy was introduced) and the growing weakness of the state, is largely due to the internal rivalry within a small political-military elite, in which the army *de-facto* is the strongest force. With limited legal and institutional frameworks, elections in Guinea-Bissau have been more of a destabilizing moment, often leading to violence, than a unifying one.



- Over time, the Balanta have come to make up a substantial proportion of the army, introducing an ethnic element into national politics that today is becoming more visible.
- There is no doubt that the army needs to be downsized and modernised. Estimates of its current numbers range from 5,600-9,000 with 3,600 being finally agreed after long negotiations as the target for downsizing. Modernisation should lead to a more ethnically balanced and therefore more representative army and redeployment in function of the current security needs (more navy than infantry for example).
- That **downsizing, however cannot be undertaken as a technical-quantitative exercise. The socio-political and historical dimensions need to be taken into account.** A sizeable proportion of the army (and of the police) is made up of veterans of the liberation struggle. To complicate matters, in Guinea-Bissau it is difficult to know who is an ex-combatant or veteran considering that many people have been involved in different wars and conflicts. They want reform that recognizes their contribution to the country, also tangibly expressed in monetary terms. Many of the veterans are old now, and cannot be re-trained, thus they seek retirement. These financial security concerns are also responsible for the fact that currently about two-thirds of the armed forces are officers of the grade of 'commander' or above, because only from that level onwards is pay more reasonable. In order to ascertain which military personnel are active and which ones are veterans, a census will need to take place to determine how many people are involved and what the total cost of the process should be. The need for more financial resources dedicated to Security System Reform in Guinea-Bissau was highlighted in the meeting. The current amounts considered (Euros 7.7 million- 4 millions for demobilization, 1.2 million for the reinsertion of ex-combatant and 2.5 million for the execution of the programme) are not deemed sufficient.
- The reintegration of the demobilized soldiers and police will also have to be followed very closely. Past demobilizations left the 'beneficiaries' without enough resources so that many of them returned to the forces.

## 2. Stronger coherence, inclusion and national leadership

The current Security System Reform efforts in Guinea-Bissau also need strengthening in other ways:

- Although recent political crises and especially the prevalence of narco-trafficking have broadened the number of international assistance actors with an interest in Guinea-Bissau (UN, EU, ECOWAS and several bilateral are engaged and the Peacebuilding Commission made it one of its focus countries in December 2007), the international efforts are not fully coherent.
- National commitment and leadership are also weak. There is a feeling that without the international encouragement, the government would not be moving very much on SSR and that in any case they want much of the financial burden to be carried by donors. With the frequent changes of government, which also imply changes in public administration, it should not come as a surprise that national coordination is weak. Yet bypassing government only reinforces and prolongs the problem. The national authorities should definitely be kept in the picture very closely.
- There is a national strategy document endorsed by parliament that can and should serve as common framework for external actors.
- **Involving civil society and the general population in the implementation of the reforms is important.** Achieving democratic security also implies broader societal involvement in major reform processes. Such involvement is necessary to build wider legitimacy for and trust in the institutions of the state. This is also envisaged in the National Strategy document for SSR. In the current programmatic designs however, there are simply not enough windows for wider public involvement,

neither among the national authorities or the international assistance actors. The members of the security forces also have to be actively engaged and made part of the process.

- A programme like 'Voz di Paz' (jointly implemented by Interpeace and Bissau-Guinean partner INEP) is one mechanism to mobilize greater public participation in this and other aspects of the management of public affairs.
- "We" are as the "international community" –generally speaking- not clear however about the 'standards' for 'involvement': when can the level and quality of 'public participation' be considered as having been 'good enough'?

The debate turned on questions of the influence of narco-trafficking in Guinea Bissau and on the SSR process. Although growing rapidly in importance, the use of Guinea-Bissau (and other neighbouring areas such as Sierra Leone, Guinée Conakry and coastal Senegal) as logistical "hub" for narco-trafficking from South America to Europe is a fairly recent phenomenon. Had earlier attempts at SSR been better designed and carried through, they would not have become confounded by this new factor as is now the case. There are plenty of examples to suggest that the army, police and government officials have not been able to resist the lure of making comparatively large sums of money very quickly. This should also not surprise in a country whose population is poor.

According to a panelist, a majority of personnel in the security forces would not resist demobilization because of this new opportunity for gain, if they were offered a decent package. The greater risk, in his view, is the attempts of narco-traffickers to buy their way into the political system where they can benefit from parliamentary immunity, diplomatic passports, etc. That would then really turn Guinea-Bissau into a narco-state.

There are some regional dimensions to the challenges of statebuilding and SSR in Guinea-Bissau, especially related to Senegal. Guinea-Bissau borders the troubled Casamance region in southern Senegal. There are strong links between Casamance and Guinea-Bissau: not only was the area once a Portuguese province as well (swapped with France in exchange for another region) so that the people there also speak Creole, but it is also a same ethnic group that straddles the border. The Casamance rebels have used Guinea-Bissau periodically as a rear base. Senegal did intervene on one side in the violent internal confrontation that ripped Guinea Bissau apart in 1998-99, which has not been forgotten. Senegal definitely watches Guinea-Bissau very closely. It would be incorrect however to believe that the unrest and periodic rebellion in Casamance is the result of instability in Guinea-Bissau.

### **Key conclusions**

Security system reform, a more comprehensive framework than security sector reform, is a precondition for stability and peace. Effective SSR will also contribute to statebuilding.

SSR cannot be conducted as a predominantly technical-quantitative exercise: to be effective in the sense of being sustainable, and contributing to peace and to a state that can deliver security, it needs to be a broader socio-political process that takes account of the specific historical, social and political characteristics of a given situation.

We as the "international" community are –generally speaking- not clear however about the 'standards' for 'involvement': when can the level and quality of 'public participation' be considered as having been 'good enough'?

*“People realize it is a dysfunctional state that stands between them and a better life”  
(former Afghan Minister of Finance Ashraf Ghani )*

### III. LOCAL PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS AND LARGER STATEBUILDING GOALS: LIBERIA CASE STUDY

Much of the focus of international peace making is at the elite level, seeking ‘elite pacts’ between rival power brokers. Consequently, the focus of much international statebuilding is at the central level. This may be necessary, but is it sufficient? Should peacebuilding and statebuilding also happen from the bottom up? And how do the two meet?

How to effect ‘reconciliation’, a prerequisite for new social capital and social or political compacts to emerge? This is not something that international actors can import or impose.

This question was explored with Liberia as a case study.

#### LIBERIA

Some of the notable features of Liberia today are:

- Several years (13) of internal violence and war have destroyed or hollowed out the infrastructure and the institutions of the Liberian state. Although today there is an inspiring leadership, the national and local capacity to implement remains weak.
- In addition, the historical experience of people in Liberia has been that of an exclusionary state that was being used as an instrument for particular group interests and benefits (e.g. True Whig party of Americo-Liberians and the subsequent Sam Doe and Charles Taylor regimes).
- The historical governance experience did not generate a sense of a common ‘Liberian’ identity and the war has only aggravated inter-ethnic tensions and social fragmentation.
- The challenge to (re)build effective state institutions underpinned by a genuine political compact is therefore large – and will take time.
- There is growing concern about the inevitable draw down of UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), currently partially envisaged for 2010. Neither the UN country team nor the Liberian government institutions may be ready then to take over. There is a risk that a dangerous vacuum might occur, that would again be exploited by conflict entrepreneurs. The current global financial crisis may create pressures for a quicker draw down.
- While those closely engaged with Liberia and probably Liberians themselves feel that continued international engagement remains vital, there is also a fear that it may be waning.



#### Key issues that came up in the discussion:

- **How can Liberians strengthen their capacities and gain ownership over policies and programmes?** It was argued that the Poverty Reduction Strategy, described as “home grown” and “truly ours” by President Johnson Sirleaf represents a positive example. It was nationally driven and used consultative processes that brought together state and society (although largely at capital city level). The Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme

(GEMAP) by contrast, designed to improve the financial systems and increase revenue, was felt to be counterproductive in the medium-term because of the dominance of foreign 'experts'.

- **How effective and how much impact do 'quick impact' projects really have?** Many of them involve infrastructure, which is necessary for economic activity and the delivery of social services. But do we take a sharp look at how much such 'infrastructure' goes unused (latrines), remains neglected or actually gets again destroyed in mob violence (e.g. a police station). What should that tell us? Should 'projects' not be much more underpinned by action-research and seek to create spaces for debate, dialogue and negotiation – to ensure that they are not built on imported assumptions but better embedded in the local realities?
- **One critical issue in the establishment of the rule of law is the frequent weakness of the state judiciary system**, as a result of which people turn to traditional justice mechanisms or simply to violent 'mob justice'. This situation is not unique to Liberia. Simply discarding or condemning any 'justice' mechanism other than the formal state one, without being able to make the latter effective (and just – and perceived to be so), is ignoring the real needs that exist. It may be wise to actively study how different 'legal traditions' and their respective dispensers can or must relate to each other, and where they can't – and to involve a broad variety of local actors in that exercise. Participatory-action-research that engages and convenes all sectors of society in this offers much promise.
- **Is a regional approach not required?** The land borders of Liberia are porous: ethnic groups straddle the borders and youth and others move around freely between Liberia, Guinée Conakry and Côte d'Ivoire in search of opportunity. This is coupled by a weak sense of 'national identity.' There are no simple answers to this and approaches are required at two levels: within each country, by strengthening the sense of citizenship and involvement in the national process, and between the countries. The recent inclusion of Côte d'Ivoire into the Mano River Union is a positive step in that regard.

### **Peacebuilding from the "bottom-up"**

The Joint Programme Unit for UN/Interpeace Initiatives (JPU) pilot project in Nimba County was intended to demonstrate the value of bottom-up peacebuilding. The phrase is deliberately 'bottom-up' and not 'local' peacebuilding, because the local efforts need to get strategically connected to the central and state level.

- The pilot project in Nimba County resulted from a request from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Nimba County is strategically situated on the border with Guinée Conakry and Côte d'Ivoire. It has repeatedly shown itself to be a flash point in the recent episodes of war, and today has the highest concentration of ex-combatants. There is still a refugee population in Guinée Conakry that feels that the right conditions to return still do not exist.
- The request for JPU support came after some 2 years of unsuccessful attempts, even by an Ad Hoc Presidential Commission, to get a meaningful breakthrough in what was seen as the key conflict: land and property dispute between Mandingo on the one hand and Mano / Gio on the other hand, with certain older antecedents but rendered acute by the fact that these ethnic groups took opposite sides in the recent decades of internal strife.
- The subsequent participatory action research by JPU in the county revealed a much richer 'conflict map', with certain conflicts related to the war and others not, certain conflicts related to land and property dispute and others not, and certain conflicts opposing the abovementioned ethnic groups and others not. The many public debates and dialogues already created connections and increased trust between people that previously had seen each other in more antagonistic terms.

- The central obstacles to 'social peace' in Nimba County may not be so much the legacy of the war but: a) the absence of capacities for facilitation, mediation and arbitration, both from the state but also among non-state actors, and b) a perceived lack of transparency and accountability of the local authorities to the local populations over the development funds with which they are entrusted.
- The Nimba project also generated a set of consensually agreed recommendations on how to address this varied pattern of conflicts and how to strengthen local authority accountability. The recommendations point at roles and responsibilities for community-leaders, for local authorities, and for the central state. The recommendations were presented and discussed at a conference in Nimba County, where community-level participants, local state and non-state actors and central government representatives were all present. In short, the final proposals carried broad social and political support as a result of meaningful state-society interaction.
- If the state and other actors can follow through on this – and implementation capacity remains a concern- then this would provide both state officials and members of society in Nimba county a practical experience of meaningful dialogue and collaboration that then translates into broadly accepted (and therefore 'legitimate') action to address the problems. Is that not a component of 'good governance'?

### **Key conclusions**

These reflections therefore suggest that:

- Top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding are both necessary and complementary;
- Greater investment in bottom-up peacebuilding and local level capacities for 'peace' (i.e. for managing disputes and conflicts) would be one insurance against a dangerous vacuum when an international peace operation draws down;
- Rapid action-research can contribute to greater insight into the nature of the problems while simultaneously mobilizing diverse actors into a process of discussion and collaboration on how best to address them;
- Bottom-up participatory peacebuilding – when it gets connected to the central level- can contribute to greater legitimacy and effectiveness of state institutions i.e. to state building. This of course also requires a state whose officials are prepared to listen – and with a certain capacity to follow through on its required role.

#### IV. THE ROLE OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN STATE BUILDING: CASE STUDY SOMALI REGION

The term 'non-state actor' can encompass a wide variety of people and entities. We therefore need to be clear who is referred to: it can be 'civil society' in the broad sense of all types of intermediary organizations including e.g. professional associations, trade unions, religious institutions and networks; it can be NGOs in a narrower understanding; the private sector and/or armed non-state actors. So-called 'traditional' leaders, when not in public sector functions, would also be considered 'non-state actors'.

Several ways were identified in which (some of these) non-state actors can engage with and contribute to statebuilding:

- **Non-state actors substitute the state where the latter is unable or unwilling to deliver services**

This of course often happens in conflict and post-conflict situations. There is a specific field of research and debate on the advantages (e.g. closer to the clients hence better assessment of needs, greater cost-effectiveness etc.) and disadvantages (geographical patchwork with gaps; different standards between different deliverers, may not be sustainable etc.) of services like health, education, water and sanitation being delivered by non-state actors.

External actors supporting service delivery by non-state actors may get project benefits in the shorter term but do not address the weakness of the state in the longer term. So a question was whether there should be perhaps different roles and functions for the state and non-state actors with regard to service delivery in different conditions.

But there are other more problematic areas e.g. with regard to the 'delivery' of 'governance' by criminal gangs controlling whole areas or the delivery of 'mob justice' in areas where the justice system is widely seen to be dysfunctional.

- **State opponents are being brought into the state framework**

Peace-making especially through power-sharing agreements brings opposition forces, including armed ones, into the framework of the state. The peace agreements in Northern Ireland and in Burundi are two examples. A more inclusive state inspires greater confidence and sends a message of reconciliation. Can other, unarmed non-state-actors play a role in engaging the armed non-state actors? How can they be practically supported in this without putting them at risk?

- **Non-state actors can help to stabilize the state**

Political support from the diaspora for example, or economic benefits created by the business community can help deliver 'peace dividends' and enhance the credibility of the state. The Irish-American community for example played an important role in both these aspects in the North Ireland peace process. A question is whether and how 'statebuilders' should go beyond the public sector and get involved e.g. with markets.

- **Non-state actors raise the expectations and standards and benchmarks for state performance**

Non-state actors, particularly civil society, often raise public expectations and place demands on the state and seek to hold it accountable. There are risks involved however: non-state actors can come to be perceived as 'political opposition' and even as 'instruments of the donors'.

External actors have to be careful whether and how to support non-state actors to play such role: if a regime is likely to be (somewhat) responsive i.e. adaptive to evolving expectations and demands, then the scenario may turn out positive; but if a regime is highly unresponsive it will react with repression (e.g.

Myanmar). External encouragement and support of the non-state actors for such role can therefore increase their risk.

- **Non-state actors can model the state**

What remain deep divisions at the political and mainstream social level can already have been overcome in certain environments created by non-state actors such as women and youth groups, cooperatives or trade unions, schools etc. In Northern Ireland for example Catholics and Protestants in certain workplaces would be part of the same trade union, while there were also integrated schools and universities before the signing of the Good Friday agreement. Non-state actors here also opened the space for certain communities and the police to engage with each other again, where previously the relationship had broken down completely. In short, non-state actors are leading on the path to a 'new society' and creating constructive linkages between state and society.

## SOMALI REGION

- The ability of non-state actors to provide services is well illustrated by the Somali situation, where health, financial, communications and educational services among others for years now have been provided by non-state actors, in the total absence of a public sector (south-central) or with relatively weak public sectors (Puntland, Somaliland). Somalis have taken this far beyond the level of 'projects' with e.g. universities with thousands of students and various departments.
- Although Somaliland and Puntland have not been able so far to settle their territorial dispute, both have seen their own armed political opposition get included in the respective public sector frameworks. Although Somaliland's independence is not internationally recognized, the Somalilanders have been pursuing their own internal process of 'democratisation'. The same holds true for Puntland.
- The Somali business community is not confined to their respective regions, but provides connections between them and also operates internationally. Somali business skills are well known and there is no doubt that in a stable environment they could be an important driver of economic activity. New governmental frameworks would have to encourage this and resist the temptation to become over controlling, while the business community will have to accept the measure of discipline and regulation that comes with a state structure, and be willing to abide by it e.g. through paying taxes. Meanwhile however, the ongoing violence means that significant economic dividends of Somali entrepreneurship benefit others e.g. in Djibouti, Kenya and Dubai.
- Somali civil society has become strong and for years has been active in trying to create a positive environment for peace and reconciliation. Where a public sector has been re-created the respective civil societies are also enhancing the understanding of their roles and responsibilities among the public, and the expectations about their performance. The risks in doing this have recently significantly increased with the 'internationalisation' of the violence. Somali civil society has not been immune to the multiple external influences and agendas that are now at play, which are creating sectors of different persuasion also within that civil society. There certainly has been and continues to be one strand towards 'Arabisation' and 'Islamisation' that has reflected itself not just in the building of mosques or the attire of women but also in the educational facilities and opportunities. There is therefore not or no longer 'one' civil society in the Somali environment. In the latest type of war being played out in the Somali regions, the risks for civil society have also significantly increased, with especially in south-central Somali Region a spate of targeting killings of civil society leaders.



- Somali non-state actors have certainly been 'modeling' (different examples) what a new society can look like through e.g. collaborating without reference to clan identity or creating the spaces to bring Somali youth and women into the public debates.

Still, peace seems to remain elusive and so too is a new state structure at least for south-central Somali Region.

Why is this?

A number of factors contribute to the continuation of violence and human tragedies in the Somali region. Among the more important ones are:

- The mistrust of the state among those Somalis that have experienced the consequences of state capture by Siad Barre and the subsequent manipulation of the state for specific interest groups and against others. Since then there is also a new generation of Somalis that has never had any experience of what an environment with state presence is like.
- The Somali Region does not have many resources but is strategically positioned and therefore was already coveted terrain during the Cold War. It has connections to Africa but also to the Arab and wider Muslim world and therefore is of interest to the regional organization IGAD, but also to the African Union and the Arab League.
- Ethiopia has national security interests in the Somali Region which go back to the 'Greater Somalia' aspirations shortly after independence in 1960 and which were further heightened by the Ogaden War and more recently by Somali militants in its eastern 'Somali Region 5'. Ethiopia in the past supported Somali armed opposition groups to Siad Barre's regime and continues to interfere in Somali politics. But now south-central Somali Region has also become a proxy field of contest driven by the animosities between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- Subsequently, the Bush administration has turned the Somali Region into a 'war on terror' battlefield. The policy of seeking to oust and defeat the Union of Islamic Courts as a whole missed out on the significant differences that existed within that movement and the popular support they had for the stability and security they brought after defeating the warlords. These internal differences have more recently become clearer again in the split between those engaging in the negotiations in Djibouti and hard line factions.
- Most recently the piracy off the Somali coast affecting international trade, has led to a further 'internationalisation' of the crisis. What is less talked about is the prior 'internationalisation' of the resource plunder by foreign vessels of the fish stocks within Somali waters that affected the livelihoods of Somali fishermen. The absence of a(n effective) state here not only has consequences for the protection of international trade against Somali predators but also the protection of Somali interests against international 'predators'.

In short, it is a mistake to understand or portray the Somali violence as a persistent 'internal' conflict between Somali clans and sub-clans. This is a deeply internationalized conflict that also undergoes significant mutations over time. What drives the violence in the Somali Region today is profoundly different from what drove it in the early 90s.

And if Somali is the quintessential example of a 'failed state', it is also the quintessential example of 'failed state building'. The constant interference of outsiders with different agendas has been factor in the continued failures at peace making. Where Somalis have been given the space to take a lead in making peace among each other, they have typically fared better. In addition, the old leadership that for years has been invited to the internationally supported peace conferences cannot lead a reconciliation process. They are not representative and do not have enough legitimacy in wider Somali society. Many external

actors fail to recognize that a new generation of leadership is emerging, mostly from the circles of non-state actors. Perhaps this is where the hope for the future lies.

## THE PEACEBUILDING – STATEBUILDING NEXUS

### Peacebuilding and state building: mutually reinforcing processes?

The OECD-DAC definition ‘statebuilding’ is: “An endogenous process to develop capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relationships.”

Peacebuilding, from an Interpeace perspective, focuses on a particular ‘capacity’, namely the one to manage the inevitable differences of vision and interest in non-violent ways. These capacities are required not just at the level of the state institutions but throughout all levels of society.

It certainly seems that peacebuilding and state building are mutually reinforcing.



The case studies seem to confirm this:

- In Guinea-Bissau the weakness of the state means reduced delivery of basic services, little policy guidance and little capacity for problem solving. That affects the economy, but also society. The state has limited capacity to control its territory or contain corruption, which gives free play for narco-traffickers.
- Although the top leadership in Liberia has a vision and is committed, the actual capacity of the state remains weak. One consequence of this is its inability to provide regulatory and mediating services around the conflicts that plague Nimba County – but also other areas of the country.
- In the Somali Region it appears that the prolonged absence of a state is a major cause of continuing anarchy and violence which has now reached a point that it is even affecting international trade.

The solution therefore seems to re-establish a functioning state in the Somali Region and to strengthen the capacities of the state in Guinea Bissau and Liberia.

### Statebuilding through Peacebuilding lens

A secondary look at the case studies, however would invite us to be more cautious.

First any historical perspective will show that the process of ‘state formation, be it from within or in the context of empire or post-empire ‘nation-building’, has nearly always been a violent one. Statebuilding itself is largely a top-down and rather authoritarian process – ‘democratisation’ tends to come slowly. In

statebuilding power relationships are re-shaped which typically implies that there are winners and losers. The resulting political culture is often – at least for an initial period- one of ‘winner takes all’. Having the outward appearances of a ‘democratic political system’ does not necessarily alter that.

Political scientists have developed a whole vocabulary to describe aspects of this phenomenon: ‘state capture’, ‘patrimonial state’, ‘predatory state’, ‘contested state’ etc.

This is illustrated by the case studies:

- Guinea-Bissau as a state emerged out of a violent liberation struggle against the colonial power. Although there was some infighting in the original ‘single party’, the near continuous elite-infighting appeared with the introduction of multi-party ‘democracy’.
- The Liberian state emerged around the return of freed slaves from the USA who imposed themselves on a native African population and for some 150 years monopolized power. Their reign was ended in a coup by Sam Doe who then in turn started using the state resources for the benefit of his specific support base. Later another warlord, Charles Taylor, also with a specific support base, managed to ‘capture’ the state.
- The Somali state started on the road to decline and eventual collapse when Siad Barre took power in a military coup and subsequently used the resources of the state for the benefit of his specific support base and against other Somali groupings.

In short, the historical and living memory of ‘the state’ among the populations in these societies, is less likely to be associated with ‘peace’ than it is in the minds of external actors (who therefore may forget or ignore the violent past of the formation of their own states, with its often rich array of internal rebellions, civil wars, expansionist wars etc.).

The examples also signal that each situation has its own historical and contemporary configuration that state and peacebuilding strategies need to take into account and adapt to. There is not one strategy that is applicable everywhere.

### **Contemporary statebuilding**

Contemporary statebuilding wants to arrive at more inclusive and better balanced states that value and uphold contemporary norms more quickly than most historical process have done. And it wants to take the violence out of the ‘state formation’ process. That is a tall order. All the more so when this takes place in a post-conflict situation when populations are traumatized, human resources and capacities are limited, the economy is weak; trust in leaders low, and where there is still a strong culture of violence.

Statebuilding in such contexts will already have difficulty in addressing both past and existing fault lines and sources of division and conflict. But it risks sowing additional seeds of division and conflict. We do not listen enough or seriously enough to what ordinary people in divided societies have to say. If we did, we would hear disturbing messages such as strong opposition to multi-party politics and elections because they are experienced as sources of division and violence, or strong opposition against a rule of law that protects the rights of the accused because it is experienced as encouraging a culture of impunity. These are not isolated views. And they should not be simply dismissed as ‘ignorant’ or ‘irrelevant’.

So the challenge is not just to build or rebuild a functioning state. The key questions are: what sort of state and above all, whose state? Statebuilding has to be undertaken with a peacebuilding lens. That means that state builders constantly have to ask key questions:

- Who wins and who loses in different options?

- How to proceed so that action builds rather than erodes trust?
- Who needs to be involved to make the process legitimate and create broad enough social and political support?
- Who is best placed to facilitate what process: what role for which internal and which external actor; what role for which state and which non-state actor?
- Is there strong and growing local ownership of the process and its outcomes?
- Can a certain option actually be sowing the seeds of future resentment and possible conflict?
- Are solutions offered and pursued based on compromise or even consensus?