



## Policy Options on Democratic Reform

# **Democracy and United Nations Peace-building at the Local Level: Lessons Learned**

**Paul Risley  
Timothy D. Sisk**

This report is based on the outcomes of a project carried out by International IDEA in 2001-2004 on the United Nations and Democracy. The project was made possible thanks to generous grants from the governments of Belgium, Japan and Norway. IDEA recognises the valuable inputs and cooperation of the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and the Peacekeeping Missions in Kosovo, Timor Leste and Sierra Leone in the development of this report.

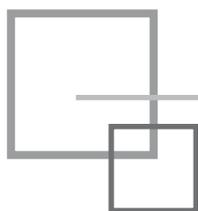
---

© International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2005

International IDEA publications are independent of specific national or political interests. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of International IDEA, its Board or its Council members.

Applications for permission to reproduce or translate all or any part of this publication should be made to:  
Publications Office  
International IDEA  
SE -103 34 Stockholm  
Sweden

ISBN 91-85391-61-1



## Preface

---

One of the most poignant lessons learned from peace-building endeavours in recent years is that, while the international community must immediately reconstruct and recreate legitimate national-level administration in countries emerging from civil war, without simultaneous initiatives to develop legitimate local-level governance sustainable peace will remain elusive.

It was once thought that local-level action could be deferred for years while national state structures were being recreated or reformed. During the initial peace-building operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Namibia, the local level needed to wait for national-level politics to stabilize. Today, it is widely appreciated that this approach was, if not flawed, inadequate. It is now clear that legitimate local-level governance is needed at once in post-war environments to provide for human security, to enable the delivery of essential services, to allow citizens to have a voice in the political process, and to foster reconciliation among contending social groups. Indeed, a smart strategy is to build democracy and to nurture peace from the bottom up; they are, or should be, complementary aims.

Like the national level of governance, truly legitimate, sustainable local-level governance can only be accomplished through the promotion of democracy. Even in transitional periods, popular participation and local ownership are required if the new political structures

are to enjoy legitimacy. Without it, governance cannot be effective, and services cannot be delivered in a fair manner. How can the international community, and especially the United Nations (UN), more effectively promote bottom-up, democratic local-level governance in post-war situations?

This Report summarizes the findings of a three-year project at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) on the UN and democracy that has focused on the international organization's role in the democratization of Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste—each of which has been under UN transitional administration following armed conflict. In particular, the project has concentrated on:

- the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) municipal administration in the disputed territory;
- options for new local democracy structures and decentralization in Timor-Leste following independence in May 2002; and
- opportunities for local governance in post-war Sierra Leone, which in 2004 held elections for newly created local-level democratic institutions.

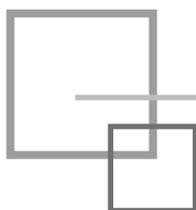
IDEA is grateful to the Governments of Belgium, Japan and Norway for their generous support of the project.

In this Report, findings on the activities of UN transitional administrations and other similar cases, such as Macedonia, are evaluated in the context of overall lessons learned about the imperatives of local-level democracy promotion for post-war peace-building. Based on the analysis, the Report offers some alternatives and recommendations for improving policies and programmes for democratic peace-building at the local level.

In this and other projects on democracy's role in conflict management, IDEA seeks to illustrate how in practice the objectives of democracy building and peace-building can be compatible in today's turbulent world, despite some who argue that democracy should be deferred until peace is secured. Indeed, in immediate post-war environments, democracy and peace must go hand in hand with the recognition that these goals must be pursued using carefully considered strategies. This is to ensure that efforts aimed at promoting democracy and peace-building are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory.



Massimo Tommasoli  
*Acting Secretary-General  
International IDEA*



# Table of Contents

---

**Preface** ..... 3

**Introduction** ..... 7

**Part I. Local Democracy and Peace-building:**

**Exploring the Linkages** ..... 9

*Local-level Democracy in Post-war Situations* ..... 9

*Local Democracy and Contemporary Peace-building* ..... 9

*Linking to the Local: International Efforts to Tap the Grassroots* ..... 11

**Understanding Local-level Conflict Arenas** ..... 12

*Local-level Conflict: Deeply Rooted Causes* ..... 12

*Conflicts With Identity Dimensions: Ethnicity, Religion and Race* ..... 13

*Struggles for Self-determination and Decentralization* ..... 14

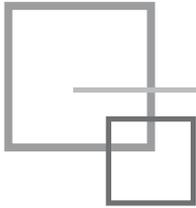
**Strategies for Local-level, Democratic Peace-building: Four Themes** ..... 14

*Imperatives of Security and Crisis Management* ..... 14

*Service Delivery: Emergency Aid and Essential Services* ..... 16

*Frameworks for Governance: Establishing Institutions, Building States* ..... 16

*Governance Processes: Elections and Participation* ..... 17



<b>Part II. Contexts .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>Kosovo .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>A Fragile Peace .....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>The UN in Kosovo: 1999–2004 .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Evaluating Kosovo .....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Timor-Leste .....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Creating Democracy Anew .....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Challenges for Local Democracy .....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Evaluating Timor-Leste .....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Other cases .....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Macedonia .....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Sierra Leone .....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Liberia .....</i>	<i>33</i>
 <b>Part III. Conclusions on Local Democracy and Peace-building .....</b>	 <b>35</b>
<i>Conclusions .....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Providing Security in Insecure Localities .....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Delivering Humanitarian Relief and Basic Services .....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Designing Frameworks for Conflict Managing Local Governance .....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Engaging Civil Society in Peace and Democracy Promotion .....</i>	<i>37</i>



## Introduction

---

Throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century, one of the most recurring ‘lessons learned’ from United Nations (UN) and other international efforts to promote peace in war-torn countries is the critical role that local-level governance frameworks, institutions and processes play in the sustainability of peace. Policy-makers, civil administrators and military officials alike have recognized that capable local-level administration is necessary for reaching goals related to the implementation of peace agreements, the prevention of renewed violence among distrusting, divided societies, and long-term economic development and reconciliation.

The new emphasis on local conditions reflects an appreciation that peace-building is essentially a state-building task requiring depth in society—creating the conditions for post-war recovery and reconciliation at all levels—and a time horizon that extends beyond the initial stabilization of politics at the national level. *Peace-building* has emerged as a theme that is central to the global promotion of peace and security in the context of the ‘new wars’ of the 1990s, in which violent ethnic strife, competition for diamonds, oil and timber, and other forms of intense ‘internal’ conflict became the primary threats to international security.

Peacekeeping by the UN and regional organizations became commensurately ‘complex’. In addition to the fundamental tasks of negotiating peace deals, overseeing ceasefires and disarming combatants, the international community has become deeply engaged in delivering humanitarian relief, reconstituting national governments, demobilization and de-mining, organizing and holding elections, monitoring human rights, returning refugees, restoring infrastructure and promoting reconciliation. Local-level action is essential to the attainment of these objectives.

Moreover, local-level governance, to be legitimate, accountable and consequently effective, needs to be democratic. Democracy at the local level provides a critical building block for state reconstruction. Indeed, despite all of the difficulties associated with establishing a democracy after a civil war, devastating social violence and, in the worst instances, crimes against humanity, there is no feasible alternative to democracy as the core principle for post-war nation building. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan succinctly described the connection between post-war democracy and peace as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup>Annan, Kofi, ‘Why Democracy is an International Issue’, Cyril Foster Lecture, University of Oxford, 19 June 2001, available at <http://www.escwa.org.lb/information/press/un/2001/word-pdf/19june.pdf>.

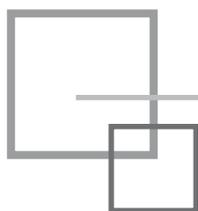
**‘At the centre of virtually every conflict is the State and its power—who controls it and how it is used. No conflict can be resolved without answering those questions, and nowadays the answers almost always have to be democratic ones, at least in form.... Democracy is practised in many ways, and none of them is perfect. But at its best it provides a means for managing and resolving disputes peacefully, in an atmosphere of mutual trust’.<sup>1</sup>**

Without local-level democratization initiatives, peace-building remains incomplete and unsustainable. The basis for long-term peace is a meaningful and well-developed democracy. At all levels of society, the legitimacy of local-level governance is critical, because this is the tier of authority to which people turn first to satisfy basic human needs.

This Report builds on IDEA’s earlier work on democracy at the local level and, in particular, on its 2001 *Democracy at the Local Level Handbook*. It explores the specific reasons why democracy building at the local level is both critically important and extremely challenging.

The analysis points to the need to conceive strategies for local-level democratization and peacekeeping that put an emphasis on:

- i) providing security to the local population through the establishment of capable, autonomous and legitimate local authorities. Security is a vital objective, but also one of the most difficult to achieve in a post-conflict environment. Until local capacities are put in place, therefore, the ‘security gap’ should be addressed through appropriate forms of international assistance;
- ii) ensuring that the delivery of humanitarian aid and basic services is based on transparency, accountability, participation by beneficiaries, a direct relationship with local authorities and a good understanding of local needs;
- iii) designing local governance frameworks that support conflict management. This includes creating options that avoid ‘winner-takes-all’ democracy, appropriate sequencing of elections at the local and national level, taking fully into account specific historical and geopolitical circumstances, and balancing decentralization and fragmentation; and
- iv) involving civil society and, especially, youth in all peace-building and democracy promotion efforts.



## Part I. Local Democracy and Peace-building: Exploring the Linkages

### Local-level Democracy in Post-war Situations

There is increasing recognition within the policy community that establishing or resuscitating local-level state capacities to deliver security and services is an important if not critical early intervention activity in post-war situations. An integral aspect of building local-level capacity for genuine, inclusive, democratic political processes is helping the newly established local structures acquire the legitimacy needed to carry out tasks in a sustainable manner. Lessons learned from previous peace-building missions reveal that failure to develop local-level democracy frustrates the pursuit of security and hampers service delivery. Where municipal-level governance is more democratic and where there is community involvement in decision-making, security, relief and development endeavours are more likely to last over time.

This section explores these and other linkages between local democracy and peace-building after deadly violence and civil war. Below is an evaluation of the principal ways in which local democracy can contribute to peace-building efforts, the difficulties international

organizations face in engaging at the local level, and strategies for, and approaches to, achieving more successful peace-building efforts through localized action. In the following section (2.0–2.4), four central themes are explored in more detail: security; service delivery; elections; and civil society.

### Local Democracy and Contemporary Peace-building

These are difficult times for peace-building. The unsettled international climate that has emerged following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA, and the war in Iraq waged without the authority of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), has brought into question the continued relevance of peace-building. Neclă Tschirgi of the International Peace Academy (IPA), rightly questions whether many of the gains made over the past decade in developing an international capacity to respond to violent conflict can endure. She contends that there has been a return to state-centric approaches to security, meaning that international engagement to build peace after civil wars will occupy a lower position on the international agenda as long as terrorism and Iraq dominate the headlines.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Tschirgi, Neclă, *Peace-building as the Link between Security and Development: Is the Window of Opportunity Closing* (New York: International Peace Academy, December 2003).

At the same time, the demand for better understanding and policy frameworks for successful peace-building remains. This is true even if many of today's most urgent situations—from post-war Iraq to the 'failed state' of Liberia to war-torn Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sri Lanka—are not able to attract the same type of ambitious international response seen in the 1990s to end civil wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador or Mozambique. While the context of peace-building has changed the imperative of adopting a more holistic and transformational approach to post-war conflict management has not waned.

Peace-building—a term coined in the early 1990s to describe post-war 'complex' peace operations—is increasingly focusing on the creation of viable, national-level democracy systems that are inclusive and consensus oriented (as opposed to fully competitive) or based on power sharing, and which accord priority to processes of constitution-making and constitutional reform and to national-level elections. This focus is not necessarily misplaced, since the creation of viable post-war governments is essential to ending wars.

Likewise, peace-building has also been a matter of post-war democratization.

**'Democratic validation' of peace agreements reached by political leaders—government officials and rebels, for example—is viewed as a necessary step, and a critical turning point, in the peace-building process. As Ben Reilly appropriately observes, 'In any transition from conflict to peace, the creation or restoration of some form of legitimate authority is paramount.... The support of the citizenry must be tested and obtained.... The overarching challenge of peace-building is to construct a sustainable democratic state that can function without international involvement'.<sup>3</sup>**

Indeed, in Bosnia, Cambodia and East Timor, and presently in Afghanistan, for instance, the UN has been at the centre of post-war election processes; in many other contexts, such as Nicaragua, Rwanda or South Africa, international observers have played important roles in assisting and monitoring elections that usher in post-conflict peace. Among the tasks are the establishment of electoral administration institutions, such as election management bodies, creation or validation of voters' roles, registration of new voters, training election officers, helping draft political-party laws, assessing the security situation in relation to

## Peace-building and Local-level Conflict Management: A Summary of the Connections

- *Containing disruptions from below.* Local-level conflict and violence can undermine broader attempts to consolidate peace through democracy by causing 'disruptions from below' that increase insecurities, exacerbate differences, challenge capacities for security and reinforce intolerance. Robust local democracy systems are more likely to manage and contain such 'disruptions from below' than are municipal authorities lacking legitimacy and the consent of the people. There is a risk, however, that empowerment at the local level can lead to 'warlord' politics if strong, intolerant, corrupt leadership is already in place or emerges in the post-war environment.
- *Extending the depth of peace through democratization.* Democracy at the local level deepens peace-building processes and broadens the basis of peace at the community, municipal and city level. Strong systems of local democracy diffuse values of tolerance, inclusion, accountability and citizen participation through a wider network of government and a proliferation of arenas of interaction.
- *War-free zones.* A democratization agenda (including aspects like participation in the management of community programmes) may also contribute to the creation of 'war-free zones'. Depending on the nature and the dynamics of the conflict, such zones can have a positive impact on neighbouring areas, but they can also remain isolated 'islands of peace', disconnected from the rest of the territory, with limited influence on the broader conflict.

<sup>3</sup> Reilly, Ben, 'Democratic Validation', in John Darby and Roger MacGinty (eds), *Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes* (London: Palgrave, 2003).

polling, managing election day(s), counting ballots, and certifying outcomes.

The ‘electoral validation’ of peace agreements needs to accompany other important aspects of democracy building and, in particular, the construction of a democratic institutional framework and the strengthening of a supportive social environment through consensus seeking and inclusive dialogue and reconciliation initiatives. Encouragement and facilitation of such processes have also become part of the daily work of most contemporary multifaceted peace-building missions set up by the UN and other international bodies.

This fundamental appreciation that peace-building is about democratic state building is coupled with stark recognition that prior efforts to build peace have failed to devote sufficient attention to the local level. Tschirgi argues, for example, that: ‘Despite lip service being paid to the centrality of local ownership of peace-building, it is not clear that international actors have developed effective strategies for assessing local needs, setting priorities, allocating resources, or establishing accountability’.<sup>4</sup> This deficit in international engagement has been especially true at the municipal or city level, where in fact many of the wars of the recent years have been waged.

How can local democracy promotion contribute to peace-building? Two findings emerge as critically important in terms of the local democracy–peace-building nexus (see the box below).

### **Linking to the Local: International Efforts to Tap the Grassroots**

Innovative approaches, sustained engagement and wise investments can yield enduring results for conflict mitigation through programmes that create local capacities to prevent the emergence of violence, to manage it when it occurs, and to foster reconciliation, reconstruction and democracy in post-war environments. Contemporary conceptual post-war conflict management frameworks put forward the ‘conflict transformation’ approach to provide guidance on the design and programmatic specifics of supporting local-level governance capacities for managing conflicts.<sup>5</sup>

The conflict transformation approach emphasizes two dimensions. The first focuses on ensuring that the peace-building efforts is evenly balanced among various levels of society – top-level leaders, community and factional leaders, and the grass roots – in a complementary fashion. In peace-building efforts of the early 1990s, it was seen that there was too much emphasis on political “elites” and not enough on mid-level leadership and on broader public support for peace. The second dimension concerns the design of programmes that address short-, medium- and long-term objectives for conflict mitigation, which are reinforcing and sustainable over time. This approach cannot be formulaic, though, as summarized in a July 2004 IPA report on state-building strategies: ‘A key dilemma is how to strike the balance between necessary decentralization, in recognition of the division of power through disparate actors, and the importance of building a centralized state that can itself provide certain basic public good for the population’.<sup>6</sup>

The challenges of local-level peace-building are evident in the long-running efforts to achieve conflict transformation in the divided city of Mostar, which was the scene of significant violence and displacement during the 1992–95 war. Mostar is one of the most divided cities in post-war Bosnia, and it has proven extremely resistant to international efforts to promote post-conflict reconciliation. During the war, the historic city hall and centuries-old Ottoman Old Bridge, linking the city’s divided communities, were destroyed. Post-war, the Croat and Muslim communities remain distrustful and highly nationalistic.

After more than five years of frustrated attempts to use infrastructure rehabilitation to promote cross-communal reconciliation, Mostar has had its share of the international limelight as a ‘poster child’ of local-level reconciliation. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)’s Office of the High Representative’s programme to remodel the city administration has sought to promote reconciliation initiatives through social inclusion. The programme seeks to reconstitute the city administration to ensure that no ‘constituent people’ would acquire more than 50 per cent of seats on the reformed city council, and that fair representation would be assured in all admin-

<sup>4</sup> Tschirgi, Neclă, *op. cit.*, Peace-building

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the ‘conflict transformation’ approach, see Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Chesterman, Simon, Ignatieff, Michael, and Thakur, Ramesh, *Making States Work: From State Failure to State-Building* (New York: International Peace Academy, July 2004).

istrative offices. The famous Old Bridge across the city was reopened in July 2004 with a global broadcast ceremony, with dancing, fireworks and speeches, involving both sides of the divided community and international representatives. Although the reopening of the bridge is seen as a dramatic turning point in the peace-building process, others point to mostly continuing tension among the still-divided residents of this Balkan town.

## Understanding Local-level Conflict Arenas

While national-level peace settlements seek to end fighting, achieve an overall solution to an internal conflict—power sharing, separation or decentralization, for example—and create a process for implementing the terms of an agreement, their on-the-ground implications are invariably uneven. Indeed, recent findings on the impact of civil war and internal conflict are that their effect on war-torn societies is often differential: some areas of the country, or some cities, are much more affected by war, either as the locus of fighting or as the subject of conflict (including over land or natural resources). From civil wars to terrorist attacks, from deadly ethnic riots to criminal conflict, violent encounters today are increasingly concentrated in local contexts.

Many of today's armed conflicts have their origins in essentially local dynamics, play out in local settings, or involve fights over disputed territory and local self-control. In recent years, greed-based competitions have fuelled wars over locally scarce or especially lucrative natural resources, such as diamonds, drugs, oil and timber. Urban rioting has become an essential feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century landscape. Furthermore, 23 armed conflicts in 2002 were struggles for local self-determination, from Chechens in the Russian Federation to Acehnese in Indonesia to Oromos in Ethiopia.

Recent surveys of armed conflict and other forms of violence highlight the following features of local-level violence.<sup>7</sup>

- *Street-level violence* that reflects highly localized conflict conditions in community contexts where factors like poverty and scarcity, popula-

tion pressures, environmental and health risks and struggles for highly prized goods are the underlying drivers of violent social conflict.

- *Social identity disputes* that occur where the conflict is framed in terms of ethnic, religious, racial or nationalist groups in competition—party-political conflict follows similar identity patterns, and political parties often dovetail with ethnic groups.
- *Decentralization of power conflicts*, which often arise over political frameworks that determine the parameters of state power, or the flow of revenue, among local and central political authorities.
- *Territorial boundary clashes* in which demands for secession (national independence) or autonomy manifest themselves in contrast to national or state claims of territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The local dimension of contemporary armed conflict is often under appreciated. In many modern situations, from Colombia to Kashmir, violent conflict is often concentrated in those areas of countries where poverty is most endemic, livelihood resources are scarce, valuable commodities are siphoned off by central authorities, ethnic discrimination is acute, and most people live in danger of crime, displacement and other threats to personal security.

## Local-level Conflict: Deeply Rooted Causes

Poverty, social injustice, discrimination and exclusion, combined with environmental degradation, high rates of death from curable diseases, poverty and economic decline, environmental stress, and rapid urbanization, are understood to be the underlying drivers of violent social conflict. Another key root cause in many local settings where violence occurs is the absence of legitimate, capable local authorities that can manage inevitable conflicts of interest through inclusive, legitimate exercise of power. As the box on the right illustrates, violent conflict also leaves these areas more underdeveloped, complicating peace-building tasks.

In Nepal, for example, the Maoist rebellion that was instigated in 1996 began in the country's impoverished and volatile northwest provinces, where villages lack basic healthcare, education and sanitation services. The villages also suffer from chronic food insecurity, and

<sup>7</sup> For 2002 armed conflict data and further information on 2002 self-determination disputes, see Marshall, Monty G., and Gurr, Ted Robert, *A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy*, (College Park, Md.: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, February 2003), available at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/PC03web.pdf>.

### Local Conflict and Underdevelopment: Exploring the Nexus

‘Violent conflicts are often contained within certain areas of countries, driven by ethnic, linguistic and other similar faultlines... Human development is likely to be lower in areas that suffer from conflict than in areas not directly affected by it.

‘The links between conflicts and poor development can go both ways. Economic and social hardships, especially when accompanied by sharp inequalities across groups and areas, can foment violence. At the same time, conflicts are often major causes of weak economic development, leading to (among other things) health crises and destruction of infrastructure.’

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2003* (New York: UNDP, 2003), p. 48, available at <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/>.

are isolated from a national economy that thrives on international tourism. Because of its reliance on tourism for foreign exchange earnings, Nepal especially needs peace and security in those parts of the country that have been particularly affected by the violence.

Scarcity of, and unequal access to, resources have a strong bearing on local conflict conditions; often, such a situation is evident in regions where valued goods are too few. A manifestation of this kind of conflict is the rapidly growing phenomenon of locally organized movements of landless people in urban or rural spaces, found poignantly in Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Kenya, Guatemala and South Africa. In some instances, actions by landowners and the claims of the landless have generated significant violence, most recently in Zimbabwe. Ironically, plentiful natural resources are associated with violent conflict. Valuable natural resources are often concentrated at the local level and competition over them, either between localities or between local elites and the state, has been a potent source of conflict. In situations where local resources fuel greed and stimulate violence to procure goods through looting—such as the wars in Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Liberia or Georgia, driven by lust for diamonds, drugs, timber or fossil fuels, respectively—much of the most intense fighting takes place in the more localized source areas.

### Conflicts With Identity Dimensions: Ethnicity, Religion and Race

Peace-building has also been inhibited in areas where conflicts with identity dimensions are especially acute. Such conflicts emerge when in an ethnically, linguistically or otherwise plural society, one group perceives itself as the victim of discrimination, exclusion or repression by another group or groups, regardless of whether such a view is grounded in reality or is induced by political manipulation. Given such distinctions, local conflict ‘entrepreneurs’ are thus able to mobilize effectively and create the conditions needed for cohesive armed forces—gangs, militias and armies—to instigate mass social violence.

Conflicts that centre on frictions between traditional power arrangements and modern state authorities also drive local-level conflicts, particularly in settings that have witnessed a persistence of longstanding forms of community self-rule—such as hereditary chiefdoms, councils of elders or traditional religious courts—that run counter to the authority of the state and its laws and institutions. Such conflicts are often exacerbated by competition for control of income-generating natural resources or by normative values, including the rights of women. At times, central state authorities have manipulated or coalesced with traditional power arrangements in nefarious ways that have generated substantial violence, involving tribal chiefs, opposition elites and state security forces.

Violent conflict at the local level can also escalate to encompass other arenas, reinforcing or stimulating broader patterns of violent confrontation at the sub-national, national, regional or global level. Similarly, if unchecked, local-level tension can spread, reproducing itself in similar settings via spillover or contagion effects. Local-level conflicts may be the pivotal battlegrounds in larger civil wars, as struggles for control of the vital assets of key centres of power. Capital cities and territories seem to be especially vulnerable to such localized violence, as Sarajevo was during the Bosnian civil war of 1992–95 or Jakarta has been during the ethnic violence in Indonesia. In the Middle East, capital cities, including Beirut, Cairo and Jerusalem, have all witnessed significant social strife. Control over vital local ‘turf’, such as a capital city, a major port, a military stronghold or a thriving commercial centre, often itself stimulates violent encounters.

Local-level disputes may also be highly symbolic struggles with ramifications that extend far beyond

their boundaries. When locally specific characteristics, such as historical and religious symbolism, or claims for sacred rights of ownership, are involved, conflicts over these features can produce especially powerful disputes. From Islamic religious shrines in the Kashmir Valley, to the claims of ancient Islamic and Hindu temples in Ayodhya, India, to battles waged long ago on the Kosovo plain, the world's historically significant and sacred places generate their own conflict dynamics that are particularly difficult to manage.

## Struggles for Self-determination and Decentralization

Conflicts over self-determination and struggles for local self-governance characterize many of the most serious and devastating civil wars today, from the grinding, decades-long conflict in Sudan to the shorter but costly and intense fight over Chechnya. Self-determination conflicts that pit local-level aspirations for statehood and autonomy against national-level demands for sovereignty spawn devastating violence. These conflicts are especially difficult to resolve because they often involve irreconcilable claims over territory. Similarly, decentralization reforms have often been a powerful generator of violence, as states and regions compete for political control and access to state revenue.

## Strategies for Local-level, Democratic Peace-building: Four Themes

Efforts by the UN and others to mitigate local-level conflicts begin with an evaluation of ways to intervene strategically in the root causes of the violence and the dynamics of a situation to try to tip the balance toward prevention, management or recovery. Strategies for local-level conflict action have common themes: establishing professional, fair and capable local authorities able to secure group and individual security and human rights; promotion of democratic, inclusive, consensus-oriented decision-making; creating or reviving institutions and processes for just, proportional distribution of public goods; and the fostering of social integration in divided communities.

Strategies to promote local governance as a system able to manage acute social conflict are based on four key principles.

- *Implementing immediate security and crisis management capacities:* communities need home-grown and sustainable capacities for handling crises and for monitoring and ameliorating violence when it occurs. This implies a special focus on local-level political authority, policing and monitoring, and protection of human security and human rights. In an immediate post-conflict situation, there are usually no local authorities able to guarantee security for the population. Yet, establishing minimum security conditions is vital for any other peace-building effort to be effective. In an interim period—until accountable local police forces are trained and deployed—the ‘security gap’ will need to be filled by an appropriate form of direct external security assistance.
- *Delivering humanitarian and essential services,* coupled with longer-term economic development: resources and public goods must be distributed in an equitable manner, and must include non-tangible items, such as autonomy over education, and linguistic and cultural practices. Development policies should also focus on especially vulnerable groups, particularly youth and women.
- *Creating frameworks for democratic institutions and decision-making processes:* all groups, especially the disadvantaged, should enjoy representation and influence in circles of governance. Public policy must be sensitive, balanced and respectful of majority prerogatives and minority rights.
- *Holding elections and generating social capital through economic incentives:* elections remain the essential path to establishing the legitimacy of local-level governments, while at the same time building autonomous, socially integrated civil society is a prerequisite for creating the social capital required for peace. Research shows that those local settings that have a socially integrated civil society (that is, organizations that transcend the lines of conflict) are less prone to violent conflict than those that lack such social capital.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Varshney, Ashutosh, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).

These principles help identify the key questions to be addressed in each of the case studies that follow. After a brief introduction to the themes, some key questions are presented that arise for evaluations of a given context of local-level peace-building.

## **Imperatives of Security and Crisis Management**

Local authorities play critical roles in ensuring the quality of local-level democracy, and they are pivotal actors in conflict management. At the local-level, much depends on legitimate, authoritative local government, mayors, councillors, administrators and security personnel, and their capacities to prevent the outbreak of violence, to respond to crises when they occur, or to be the front line of reconstruction efforts in devastated post-war environments. Thus, international authorities endeavoured, within their peace-building mandate and with different levels of success, to set up local level authorities in Afghanistan, East Timor, Iraq and Liberia.

Providing basic, transparent and responsible policing in the community is the primary task in guaranteeing

local-level human security and human rights. Together with appropriate innovative judicial processes, local community oversight and engagement with police and other internal security forces may be important in building the trust needed for policing to be effective. Local partnerships with schools, religious organizations, human rights monitoring bodies and leaders of minority and indigenous groups have proven to be important in promoting healthier relations among police and judicial entities in troubled communities.

During South Africa's violent transition from apartheid to democracy, local-level violence—in some cases, instigated by rogue police elements—threatened to undermine the fragile peace process. In response, a comprehensive system of national, regional and local peace committees was established to investigate instances of violence, to manage public gatherings, and to foster dialogue among community leaders, the police and political parties. The National Peace Accord experience has emerged as a model for local-level conciliation in the midst of violent conflict. Additionally, the conciliation structures and processes created by the National Peace Accord are credited

### **Key Questions for Practitioners and Researchers on Local Security and Democracy**

- What has been the experience of the establishment of security at the local level? Which agent has been responsible for the legitimate use of force at the local level?
- Has a (spoiler) challenge to military authority emanated from a local context (for example, a local warlord, gang or aggrieved party)? How were the challenges dealt with? What are the principal challenges to human security facing local communities? For instance, who are the most vulnerable populations and how have their needs/vulnerabilities been addressed?
- How was the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process handled and by whom? Which agents—international peacekeepers, national authorities, local communities—have been most effective in the DDR process?
- Have there been other sources of threats to human security at the local level? For example, has any given community seen significant violations of human rights in the peace-building period?
- What has been the experience of the creation of security by the post-war state (government)—military and in terms of policing—at the local level? Which approach has been most or least successful in establishing post-war security?
- To what extent have measures to promote human rights—monitoring, assessment, responses—been put in place? Which approaches have been most effective? What lessons learned exist regarding the involvement of the local community in the provision of basic human security? For instance, is there local oversight or engagement in security issues?
- What are the options for improving human security and human rights in this particular case? What needs to be done urgently, in the medium term, and over the long term?
- What are the options for improving human security and human rights in this particular case? What needs to be done urgently, in the medium term, and over the long term?

## Key Questions about Humanitarian Aid and Service Delivery

- How was immediate, post-war emergency humanitarian relief delivered? What has been the consequence of providing relief in this manner? Are there lessons to be learned concerning the impact of emergency humanitarian relief on long-term development aims?
- What approach was utilized to provide services in the immediate, post-war period? What services were delivered and by whom? What was the role of local authorities? What was the effect of this method on medium- and longer-term development objectives?
- How has the economic recovery affected attitudes to peace? To what extent has a 'peace dividend' been realized that could undermine incentives to return to violence?
- What has been the role of transitional authorities (external and internal to society) in the delivery of local services? What impact has this approach had on the creation of a sustainable system of local democracy?

with having mitigated violence and aided progress in national-level talks. Similar efforts have been made in several other states, with some success.

### Service Delivery: Emergency Aid and Essential Services

The introduction of new resources in the form of humanitarian aid in post-conflict settings can lead to competition and, rather than ameliorating conflict, can incite new disputes. Immediate humanitarian relief and intermediate-term development assistance can generate conflict over economic opportunities: employment and regular sources of income, housing, transportation and, especially, control of public budgets. Within the context of the need for humanitarian organizations to be impartial in volatile political settings and to adhere strictly to neutral and apolitical delivery of relief and reconstruction assistance, there is an almost inevitable element of humanitarian action that requires a concern that needs to focus on local democracy.

For example, whenever possible, local beneficiaries, local authorities and civil society should participate in the delivery of humanitarian aid, and it should be provided in such a way that it does not harm existing livelihoods through unintended market distortions. While aid should not unduly recognize or confer legitimacy on a local authority or a rebel movement, humanitarian relief organizations are duty bound to ensure that these local actors are involved in tasks such as needs assessment, the provision and distribution of aid, and monitoring, as well as in the transition from emergency relief to long-term reconstruction assistance. The essentially democratic principles of human rights, transparency, accountability and fairness are funda-

mental with respect to practical operational guidelines for the delivery of humanitarian relief.

### Frameworks for Governance: Establishing Institutions, Building States

Decentralization and federalism are well-appreciated approaches to managing ethnic, regional and linguistic conflict, as in India. More recently, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Ethiopia and Uganda have all adopted decentralized systems as a fundamental means of securing post-war peace. While contention and contestation between local and national authorities is a common and indeed necessary characteristic of decentralized political systems, sometimes the tensions alone are sufficient to generate political violence. These tensions create serious challenges for peace-building, even as decentralization remains a critical strategy for post-war peacemaking in situations involving claims of minority discrimination or other identity-based grievances.

In Mexico, for example, economic deprivation and the perception of local Mayas of their centuries-long discrimination and exclusion from the building of the Mexican nation were primary factors behind the uprising by rebellious peasants in Chiapas in 1994 against the central state. Many variables led to the conflict in Chiapas: endemic poverty, dislocation from land, declining employment opportunities, entrenched social discrimination, and decades of neglect. Although the Chiapas conflict was small in comparative terms (approximately 150 fatalities and a few minor battles), the conflict resulted in extensive economic and social losses to the Mexican state. Simultaneously, though, it raised the awareness of millions of Mexicans about the need to acknowledge the aspirations of the Mayas and other indigenous

### Scott Bollens on Urban Planning and Conflict Mitigation: Belfast, Jerusalem and Johannesburg

University of California, Irvine urban planner Scott Bollens has conducted extensive research on how public policy can positively affect social relations in even the most conflict unstable environments.

- Promote inter-ethnic agreement, rather than ‘winner-takes-all’ politics.
- Local policy can moderate, exacerbate or passively reflect the broader historical conflict.
- ‘Equity’ policymaking may require redistributing resources to often materially disadvantaged groups.
- Neutrality is not necessarily fair: seemingly uniform requirements dealing with land ownership or development can have disparate cross-cultural effects.
- Recognize the psychological needs of communities, including viability, security, identity and symbolism.
- Coexistence, rather than integration per se, is a more realistic goal in deeply divided communities.

For further information, see Bollens, Scott, *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000) and *Urban Peace-building in Divided Societies: Belfast and Johannesburg* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998).

peoples. An interim peace agreement was sealed in 1996, but its terms have not been fully implemented. More promising, however, is the local autonomy plan introduced by President Vicente Fox that, with the elections of June 2003, has restored some self-governance to the indigenous peoples of Chiapas and has allowed for the reintroduction of indigenous customary law and practice.

Closely related to the decentralization theme is the role of public policy. Assistance to foster a neutral, fair and effective state is critical to ensuring that public goods are distributed in a proportionate manner to all social groups, and that language, cultural, education and economic regulation is sensitive to the issues of equal dignity and respect for all nationalities (includ-

ing illegimmigrants). The research of urban planner Scott Bollens summarizes lessons learned regarding public policy frameworks for high-conflict local communities. The box on the right contains the main findings of his research.

### Governance Processes: Elections and Participation

Local elections are an essential step in post-war democratization as a peace-building strategy. Yet elections too can produce powerful incentives for conflict, particularly in cases where ethnic, racial or religious entrepreneurs fan the flames of inter-communal violence in their quest to accede to office or to retain power. It is for this reason, especially, that many consider the process of democratization and the pursuit of peace to be contradictory. Electoral conflicts may include disputes over citizenship and enfranchisement, political supremacy in central governments, appointed/administrative and elected authorities, campaign intimidation and coercion, and the fairness of balloting and winner certification processes.

Fair, legitimate and transparent electoral processes are essential to establishing strong local governments that can create the conditions for local-level peace. Local elections have proven to be pivotal in setting up governments capable of meeting service delivery needs and handling disruptive conflicts from below. However, such elections can also induce violence when electoral institutions and processes are poorly chosen or badly managed. Conflict management strategies around election time should focus on the electoral system, the rules governing local political-party formation (especially rules on ethnic parties), financing, electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, monitoring and parallel vote counting.

It is also vital that elections are not an isolated event, but rather occur as part of a broader democratization process that involves an inclusive consensus-building dialogue, adequate institutional reforms and reconciliation mechanisms. If all democratic hopes and fears exclusively centre on elections, the chances are high that the outcome will lead to a ‘winner-takes-all’ political option, widening existing social divisions and increasing the level of conflict.

Cambodia’s communal elections of February 2002 are a case in point. In the run-up to polling, threatened incumbent elites throughout the country’s 1,621 communes—which were appointed by the Cambodia

## Key Questions for Electoral and Direct Participation

- Have local government authorities been elected? If so, were the elections perceived to be free and fair? What electoral system was used, and to what effect? Did the electoral process—administration, campaigns, outcome—contribute to or exacerbate tensions at the local level? If elections were held, was there significant election-related violence? What policies or programmes have contributed to the use of elections as a conflict-mitigation process (for example, independent electoral administration, monitoring, adoption of an appropriate electoral system)?
- How does the public perceive the system of local authority? What are the effects of popular participation?
- What is the role of political parties at the local level? Does their nature and functioning generally contribute to the management of tensions, or does party-political activity contribute to community-level tensions? What can be done to improve the transition from political parties that are agents of potentially violent conflict to healthy competition that is a hallmark of a functioning democracy?
- To what extent does the organization of civil society (membership, issue articulation, location aspects) at the local level reflect lines of conflict, or does civil society transcend the divisions within society that led to or developed because of the war?
- How effectively have outside international actors worked with, or contributed to, the development of a vibrant, cross-cutting civil society? Which approaches, policies or programmes have been most successful?
- Have there been innovative or especially effective approaches to promoting trust in local settings through localized processes of conciliation, such as local reconciliation measures, problem-solving workshops, ‘track two’ diplomacy, or similar peacemaking initiatives?
- Does the news media, as an element of civil/open society, generally report on issues in a balanced way, or does media coverage of events often inflame or heighten social tensions?
- What options and recommendations have been advanced to improve the role of civil society as an agent for managing conflict across lines of contention?

People’s Party (CPP) regime—engaged in a sustained campaign of killing opposition candidates, arbitrarily arrested opposition candidates, seized property, controlled the media, intimidated voters and manipulated the electoral machinery in a bid to retain their grip on local government.<sup>9</sup> The volatile and violence-ridden local elections enabled the CPP local authorities to adopt similar tactics of intimidation in the country’s troubled 2003 national elections. Local-level control of power by dubiously elected local officials remains a primary source of political conflict in the country, undermining efforts to consolidate peace and to promote the conditions necessary for local-level development.

At the same time, there is a need for continuing measures to ensure that local authorities are accountable to the public. Thus, community participation remains a constant theme in local democracy and conflict manage-

ment. A vast array of options exists with regard to specific initiatives to improve community relations, including those that employ or rely on traditional or culturally specific conflict management methods. Peace commissions, committees, conciliation centres and councils at the regional and local level have been utilized successfully in a wide variety of contexts at different moments of conflict escalation and abatement to develop processes for pursuing local-level peace. From Eastern Europe to Nicaragua and South Africa to Sudan, peace committees have served to foster local-level peace during times of turbulent transition when the authority of local governments is perceived to be illegitimate or the structures of local democracy are in flux.

<sup>9</sup> See Human Rights Watch, ‘Cambodia’s Commune Council Elections’, *Backgrounders*, 18 January 2002, available at [http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/cambodia\\_elections.htm](http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/cambodia_elections.htm).



## Part II. Contexts

---

In recent missions in which outsiders act in a direct managerial role—termed ‘transitional administrations’—the international community, especially the UN, has confronted the complicated tasks of local-level peace-building. In this section, two case studies, Kosovo and Timor-Leste, are presented that develop the four themes highlighted in Part I. Kosovo is a logical place to start precisely because the challenge of local-level peace-building and state building has emerged in the context of an unsettled situation of sovereignty. A fragile peace has existed since 1999, but there is no agreement yet on how the territorial dispute will be resolved. As the Kosovo case shows, local democracy has materialized as a key, first-set feature of the overall negotiations to settle this longstanding dispute.

Timor-Leste, the world’s newest sovereign state, illustrates the themes in an altogether different way. A country was formed virtually from scratch following the referendum that led to independence on 20 May 2002. The UN has helped the country launch a national-level administration, and, as a second step, has turned to building a local-level democracy infrastructure.

Three other vignettes follow. Sierra Leone is another UN-guided case in which local-level governance has been established after a devastating civil war, which itself was highly localized. The country’s local elections in May 2004 accentuate many of the themes, and demonstrate the ongoing challenges of conflict transformation. To

return to the Balkans, Macedonia’s implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which arrested the country’s slide into civil war in August 2001, illustrates the local peace-building themes in a context in which the UN has played a secondary, supportive role. Finally, Liberia provides the lessons learned from a UN peacekeeping mission in place only months after the end of conflict, in a “failed state” where corruption, the complete destruction of infrastructure, population displacement and high levels of unemployment and poverty combine to create great challenges on national and international attempts to secure peace. As this last vignette points out, despite the very local concerns of population returns and immediate needs for healthcare and schools and jobs creation at the municipal and village level, the challenge of establishing local governance, peace-building and local democratic structures in Liberia remains unmet.

### **Kosovo**

In March 2004, a local disturbance caused by the drowning of two Albanian children from a village along the banks of the Ibar River—a dividing line between ethnic Serb and Albanian communities in Kosovo—led to protests, rioting and inter-ethnic violence involving mobs of mostly Albanian youths and extremists. The violence, which occurred on successive nights in towns and communities across the Serbian province, resulted

in 19 deaths, the massive displacement of many residents of Serbian enclave communities and the burning down and destruction of many Serbian-owned houses and properties in those enclaves.

The March 2004 violence—nearly five years after the establishment of a United Nations Transitional Administration for Kosovo and despite the presence of thousands of international peacekeepers, police monitors and civilian administrators—underscores the continued and unresolved tension between ethnic communities within the internationally administered area. After five years of gradual improvement in security and freedom of movement for both ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians in the divided province, virtually all progress was undermined and the very symbols of a multi-ethnic future—community centres, Serbian Orthodox churches, international organization offices—were among the targets of the ethnic Albanian rioting youth. The violence also pointed up the essentially local nature of the conflict: in most areas, heavily armed international peacekeepers were powerless to stop the violence; local police units were most successful in stemming violence; and, in some communities, local political leadership was able to prevent or mitigate violence involving persons and youths from their communities.

## A Fragile Peace

Kosovo was an autonomous province of Serbia within the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). After the regime of President Slobodan Milosevic abolished its autonomy in 1989 and imposed Serbian minority rule, the Albanian majority population experienced a decade of oppression and ethnic discrimination. In spring 1999, the worsening conflict between Serb forces and local insurgents, led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), spawned an ‘ethnic cleansing’ campaign and resulted in the exodus of thousands of ethnic Albanians. Following the breakdown of internationally sponsored negotiations at Rambouillet, France, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) intervened with air strikes. Serbian military and police forces reacted by launching widespread and systematic attacks on Albanian civilian targets across Kosovo, setting alight and looting thousands of homes, massacring groups of unarmed men, and causing nearly one million mostly ethnic Albanians to flee Kosovo for relative safety in neighbouring Albania and Macedonia.

Under sustained pressure due to NATO air strikes across Serbia and KLA attacks on the ground in

Kosovo, Milosevic reached a political agreement with international negotiators on 10 June 1999, resulting in the withdrawal of Serb military forces from the province and the peaceful deployment of a NATO-led multinational peacekeeping mission, the Kosovo Force (KFOR). The 10 June accord and UNSC Resolution 1244 of 14 September 1999 became the basis for a negotiated peace settlement with Yugoslavia, allowing for the early and rapid return of the mostly Albanian refugees to destroyed and heavily damaged homes and villages, and the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)—the transitional administration.

With the withdrawal of Serb military forces in June 1999 and increasing harassment by returning ethnic Albanians, it was now the turn of thousands of ethnic Serb civilians and members of other small ethnic communities to flee to the northern part of Kosovo, and to Serbia proper, despite the presence of KFOR and the UN. While precise figures are hard to procure, it is estimated that one-half of the pre-1999 population of ethnic Serbs left Kosovo in 1999. While as many as 150,000 ethnic Serbs remain in the northern part of Kosovo, the urban area of Mitrovica, and in enclaves and small communities across the province, they are the targets of persistent harassment

## Terms of the 1999 Kosovo Agreement

Both the 10 June agreement and UNSC Resolution 1244 deferred a decision on the ‘final status’ of Kosovo. However, ethnic Albanians have interpreted this to mean formal independence from Serbia–Montenegro, the successor state to the SFRY, while ethnic Serbs have interpreted it to mean an eventual return to, and reincorporation within, Serbia–Montenegro. The 10 June agreement envisaged that the final status issue would be resolved within three years of 1999, although it does not stipulate by what means or with which parties negotiations on a future Kosovo would advance. This matter dominates the Kosovo political agenda today, with ethnic Albanians seeking greater political power and authority from the UN administration in order to prepare for an independent majority Albanian state, and ethnic Serbs seeking closer political links with Serbia–Montenegro through the consolidation of an unofficial Serb ‘mini-state’ in the part of Kosovo extending north from the Ibar River.

and threats in a society now dominated by the majority ethnic Albanian population.

UNSC Resolution 1244 accords UNMIK sweeping powers of administration and sets out the loosely defined goal of creating a stable and secure modern state—‘to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo’—whose future status is to be determined once stabilization has been assured. Yet the resolution provides little guidance on UNMIK’s role in negotiations on the future status of Kosovo; such authority is presumed to rest with members of the Contact Group, comprising senior diplomats from six key UN member states: France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK and the USA.

Within Kosovo, UNMIK has presided over an uneasy peace for the past five years. The ethnic Albanian political leadership has been offered a ‘Standards before Status’ policy designed, in part, to delay the inevitable rush toward independence, while ethnic Serb community leaders have been offered support for a policy to encourage the return and reintegration within Kosovo of all ethnic Serb and other minority refugees who fled in 1999. The preservation of minority communities and the complete return of displaced persons—ethnic Serbs and members of smaller minorities (Bosniacs, Gorani, Roma and Turks)—are principal UNMIK goals during the transition to transform Kosovo into a stable, secure and multi-ethnic state.

### **The UN in Kosovo: 1999–2004**

Following the completion of the humanitarian mission of resettlement and reconstruction of housing units for the returning ethnic Albanian refugees—led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—in 2000, UNMIK today comprises four ‘pillars’:

- I. Police and Justice, under the direct leadership of the UN;
- II. Civil Administration, also under the direct leadership of the UN;
- III. Democratization and Institution Building, led by the OSCE; and
- IV. Reconstruction and Economic Development, led by the European Union (EU).

The pillar system, in line with a similar structure in use in Bosnia, was considered at the time to be a model management system for a peace-building operation, and was likewise copied for the 2000 intervention in East Timor.

KFOR is responsible for peacekeeping and maintaining security in Kosovo. Under the UN mandate, UN civilian police (CIVPOL) units have law enforcement authority, an authority that has gradually been devolved to the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), a newly established professional force consisting of ethnic Albanian and, increasingly, minority personnel, including ethnic Serbs. The creation and training of a local Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) with a general public safety mandate began immediately at the start of the mission as part of the overall demobilization and demilitarization of the KLA.

Establishing a secure environment and ensuring freedom of movement for members of minority communities have remained the principal challenges for international peacekeepers. Despite gradual improvement since 1999, the March 2004 violence wiped out many of the gains made in this field. Following the riots, KFOR claimed that national rules of engagement prevented many units from interceding or acting to prevent destruction of property or confronting unarmed rioters. Such restrictive rules of engagement have since been changed to allow more flexible responses and to increase the number of KFOR units that can participate in riot control.

While the protection of Serbs and other minorities within enclave communities remains a necessary priority for UNMIK, the international presence also needs to work to guarantee freedom of movement for ethnic Albanians travelling in Mitrovica/a and elsewhere within the informal Serb partition of northern Kosovo. The failure of deploying NATO-led forces in June 1999 to establish control and freedom of movement quickly and completely allowed Serb extremists in north Mitrovica/a to establish informal security forces (the ‘Bridge Watchers’) that prevent Albanians from moving freely there; conditions that prevail today.

Accordingly, and unique in terms of the sequencing of local and national elections in the short history of UN-supervised international elections, Kosovo’s first elections held under international administration were the municipal polls of 27 October 2000. Under a proportional party list (PPL) electoral system, newly created Kosovo-wide political parties fielded candidates at the local level, voter turnout was high (79 per cent) and vigorous campaigning among ethnic Albanians resulted in three predominant political parties: the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK); the Democratic Political Party of Kosovo (PDK); and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK). Each of the three parties

## The UN mandate for local governance in Kosovo: UNSC Resolution 1244

From the inception of the UN mission, the establishment of democratic local governance has been seen as a centrepiece of the international effort. UNSC Resolution 1244 specifically mandated UNMIK with ‘organizing and overseeing the development of provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government’. The international administration would establish democratic local administration in each of 30 newly created municipalities and act to promote reconciliation among ethnic communities emerging from violent conflict, protect human rights and build local institutions’ capacity to ensure public safety, healthcare, education and civil services. In transition from a Kosovo-wide economy dominated by the now ruined and mostly worthless state-owned industries of the SFRY, important decisions would have to be made at the local level regarding the disposal of state-owned properties, the use of public land and the allocation of public resources.

Finally, with Kosovo’s final status uncertain, UNMIK administrators making all ‘national’-level decisions, and the international community deliberately seeking to delay discussion of a transference of power at the Kosovo-wide level, the local or municipal level of governance was viewed as the acceptable and appropriate level of sovereign democracy on which the transitional authority would focus development, training and resources.

won in at least one assembly, with the LDK in control in a majority of municipalities. Serbs did not participate in the 2000 local elections, and in successive local polls, in 2002 and 2004, they have only voted in municipalities like Mitrovica where they constitute a majority.

In preparation for the 2000 elections, the UNMIK Civil Administration pillar established a structure of 30 local municipalities, ranging from the capital city of Pristina with a population of more than 100,000 to smaller communities of several thousand residents. The municipalities include five northern and eastern ones with Serb majorities, while Albanian majority municipalities include numerous ethnic Serb enclaves and mixed areas. In municipalities where Serb participation was not significant, international authorities have persuaded elected Albanian municipal assembly presidents to appoint ethnic Serbs as deputy presidents or to assembly seats.

International administration of local municipalities continued after the elections of 2002, with UNMIK municipal administrators and senior international administrators in Pristina exercising financial authority and wielding veto power over elected municipal assemblies. The executive authority of the elected presidents of municipal assemblies can be, and is, overruled by international officials, often without explanation. For many observers, the March 2004 violence underscored the need for a continued international presence and administration at the local level in Kosovo. Nonetheless, with its future status uncertain, and with no end date for the UNSC-approved UNMIK mandate and mission, the length of this ‘transitional’ administration and the resultant delay in a real transfer of power to the local level is unparalleled in recent UN and international transitional administration experience, such as in Bosnia and East

Timor, or, more recently, in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The 18 November 2001 Kosovo-wide elections for an elected Kosovo Assembly brought about an elected ‘provisional government’, with a president, prime minister and cabinet appointed using a proportional party system, and a power-sharing formula determined by UNMIK to ensure inclusion of the major political parties. The LDK, with 46 per cent of the vote, leads the government, which also includes the AAK and PDK.

In November 2004, the OSCE again ran provincial elections in Kosovo with a fairly good level of success. Although the overall turnout was not outstanding—53 per cent—and many Serbs again boycotted the polls, moderate political leaders favouring a negotiated solution to the disputed territory’s status won the support of the electorate over hardliners advocating a more militant solution to the conflict. The 120-seat Kosovo Assembly will begin to assume some of the functions of the UN-mandated transitional administration, leading to gradual and further restoration of self-rule.

## Evaluating Kosovo

### Theme I: Human Security and Human Rights

Threats to human security and the rights of ethnic minorities remain, especially with regard to the safety and freedom of movement of ethnic Serbs and those displaced Serbs and other minorities who may wish to return, as evidenced by the March 2004 riots. Albanians too, have suffered human rights abuse since 1999, particularly in relation to the fate of Albanian political prisoners, who were taken by Serbian police forces when they withdrew from Kosovo in June 1999. The final release

### Legitimate Local-level Policing

The best example of progress in local-level security is the establishment of the Kosovo Police Service. This is a fully professional police force with minority representation, virtually complete freedom of movement and the ability to protect all communities and individuals through multi-ethnic patrols and willingness to speak non-native languages when necessary. During the March riots, when UNMIK and KFOR units basically failed to fulfil all public safety aspects, the KPS was most successful with regard to human protection and attempting to prevent further violence.

of most of these prisoners came only after two years of protracted negotiations between UNMIK and Belgrade, during which their absence impeded a relatively smooth transition to democratic local governance.

Organized crime, smuggling and human trafficking, particularly of women, constitute serious threats to human security in Kosovo, with criminals and mafia entities suspected of having penetrated most areas of Kosovo social and public culture, contributing to the corruption of political officeholders and to public perceptions that transnational criminals hold sway in the territory. Persistent reports of continuing patronage of organized crime-owned nightclubs and brothels by UN and KFOR personnel demonstrate the ugly side of an international intervention, where the higher salaries of the internationals directly fund activities that threaten the security and rights of Kosovo residents.<sup>10</sup>

A next step will be to establish closer links between the Kosovo-wide KPS and elected municipal governments through the implementation of community policing, a law enforcement policy that grants citizens a substantial role in defining the performance parameters of policing. Democratic local governance is greatly improved when police officers are integrated into local communities to identify and reduce crime patterns specific or most threatening to the community, seek community inputs into resource and patrol allocations and act to improve community relations.

### Theme II: Service Delivery

In June 1999, as Yugoslav military forces were withdrawing, virtually all officials, employees and supporters of the old regime fled as well, taking with them cadastral and judicial records and other local administration documents. Immediately, groups associated with the KLA and a self-declared 'provisional government' under Hashim Thaqi (now leader of the PDK) immediately began to organize local administrations throughout Kosovo. Others in Kosovo, notably those associated with the LDK, rejected these efforts to usurp legitimate authority under UNSC Resolution 1244 and remained outside of this assertive political compact. The UN, KFOR and a host of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) started to address the immediate humanitarian and administrative needs of people remaining in, and returning to, Kosovo.

The UN experienced delays in becoming operational at the local level, where the need for assistance and aid was greatest. It was more than six months before UN Pillar II had deployed sufficient staff for municipal administrations throughout Kosovo. International attempts to establish local administration were encumbered by: Pillar II officials' frequent lack of experience of local governance; disagreements between the regional leaderships of Pillar II Administration, Pillar III Institution Building and KFOR in the early phases of the operation; and difficulties in cooperating with emerging local administrations.

UNMIK's work at the municipal level began with six months of open competition for control of municipal government between the UN administration that claimed legitimacy under UNSC Resolution 1244 and the provisional government that was busy establishing local administration throughout Kosovo in accordance with the provisions of the never-adopted Rambouillet Accords. This period ended with the 15 December 1999 agreement establishing the Kosovo–UNMIK Joint Interim Administrative Structure and Interim Administrative Council, which three Albanian leaders signed and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) witnessed. In consultation with local authorities, international municipal administrators began to establish interim local governments throughout Kosovo and retained full executive authority pending local elections.

<sup>10</sup> Colum Lynch, "U.N. Faces More Allegations of Sexual Misconduct," *Washington Post*, March 13, 2005, A22.

While the UNHCR-directed mission that operated in parallel to the UNMIK civil administration deployment distributed most humanitarian aid, local administrations took all community assistance and project-level decisions. In addition, significant coordination was required between the UN, KFOR, UNHCR and numerous aid organizations operating at the community level where Albanians were returning and Serbs and other minority groups were being threatened and harassed. UN civil administrators were often required to make decisions on issues of housing and infrastructure repair and development, decision-making processes made easier where administrators had access to even informal local leaders and experienced community representatives. The progress made by UNMIK in creating conditions conducive to local governance at the municipal level in the early months following the June 1999 agreement was essential to the success of the humanitarian mission.

### Theme III: Frameworks of Governance

Local government operates under UNMIK Regulation 2000/45, a basic institutional framework for local governance that initially listed set aside or ‘reserve’ powers of UNMIK municipal administrators and offered a process by which authority can be wholly transferred to local officials. Charged with establishing democratic local administrations in 30 municipalities, UN international officials have, since 1999, operated broadly in a manner that is consistent with the tasks of building local institutions’ capacity, promoting reconciliation among groups emerging from violent conflict, and providing a context in which these communities’ governments would be democratic for the first time in their history.

The UNMIK pillar system, regardless of its comprehensive approach, has been criticized, especially for its impact at the local level. With four separate entities operating in the same communities, use of the pillar system has resulted in the ‘stovepiping’ of critical information and decision-making processes—OSCE democratization officers and UN civil administrators in the same municipality do not talk to each other, for example—and in unequal progress by different pillars toward stated stabilization goals and benchmarks in each locality. At many points, particularly near elections, international officers will contradict decisions made by

a different pillar, or UNMIK will veto a particular piece of legislation that it had earlier supported.

The designation of a governance structure of 30 municipalities itself was a decision taken by UNMIK, in consultation with Scandinavian governance experts, and with limited discussion and input from central, consultative bodies of Kosovars. While the municipality-level structure, a change from the past Yugoslavia district (*Okrug*) level of government, has generally met with acceptance, the dramatic difference in population levels between municipalities does indicate a need for further adjustments.

In the past 12 months, most municipalities have been ‘emancipated’ of most UNMIK controls and are beginning to develop independent and autonomous decision-making abilities. However, UNMIK can still veto or overrule legislation emerging from municipalities and decisions made by municipal executives. Presently, there is general acceptance that a decentralizing reorganization of local governance structures to transfer power and decision-making away from Pristina/e and to an authority structure closer to the people will take place. The Council of Europe addressed these issues in a nine-month study that offered a well-intended but complex plan for decentralization of local administration<sup>11</sup> UNMIK has proposed further discussions on decentralization, which appear to constitute a positive basis for further talks between Serb and Albanian communities in the wake of the March riots.

### Theme IV: Practicing Participation

Municipal assemblies in Kosovo operate under a proportional list electoral system via which voters choose from among closed party lists, generally supporting the political party with which they most closely identify. With political power vested in the national parties, this system weakens individual voters’ ability to discern preferences that might only be important at the local level. Use of the PPL system, while it offers guarantees of stability and participation by all qualifying parties—important in post-conflict states—has been criticized for exacerbating shortcomings in local governance and the executive power of local government, eliminating constitutional accountability in local government, and lessening the rewards to well-performing elected indi-

<sup>11</sup> For further on the Council of Europe’s activities in Kosovo, including the decentralization proposals and local-democracy initiatives, see [www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/kosovo/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/kosovo/).

viduals. Despite the participation guarantees, PPL can promote stalemates in the formation of government, boycotts by parties not in power and overall politicization of local administration, leading to often correct perceptions of corruption and cronyism in the application of local services and resources.

These difficulties are exacerbated by the overwhelmingly 'national' discourse among Albanian political parties, all focused on the political issue of promoting a free and independent Kosovo, frequently at the expense of other compelling Kosovo-wide issues. This leaves little room for effective debate among the political parties at the local level, with even municipal election campaigns revolving around the independence slogan and the matter of which party has the greater legacy due to the events of 1999.

Serb political leaders, including those within elected government, for their part concentrate on fostering reintegration into Serbia and supporting parallel structures of local governance via which Serb residents continue to receive a salary, health and social insurance, a pension, child support, an identity card, a driver's license, a passport and other documents. While there is some political debate among Serb political leaders about the degree of participation vis-à-vis Kosovo government structures, the March 2004 riots have only emphasized

the continued need for tangible links with Serbia and have led UNMIK to accept their continued presence in the absence of real progress on security and freedom of movement issues for Serb residents.

Another valuable instrument for incorporating minorities into public life appears to be the international and Kosovar (mainly Bosniac, Gorani and Serb) Local Community Officers who intercede with local administration on behalf of minorities. This international institution has proven to be a relatively effective conflict mediation mechanism among non-Serb groups and in Serb areas that are not contiguous to the northern Serb-majority municipalities. Much of the work conducted by these officers was negated by the March riots and must be revived by UNMIK.

The rapid establishment of a vigorous and open news media since 1999 certainly is a benchmark of democracy's progress in Kosovo, but its effect on complex political deliberations within Kosovo is often counter-productive. In a society divided by language, a separated news media further reflects the concerns and biases of the different populations. Albanian Kosovars follow progress toward independence and other 'big picture' stories in Albanian language dailies and on broadcast programmes, while Serbs read and watch news items that mostly relay information stemming from Belgrade and Serbia proper. Investigative stories within the Albanian press that focus on public corruption can enhance accountability in governance, especially with regard to the issuing of tenders and contracts by both UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). Unfortunately, reporting by the same news media of 'leaks' and speculation about the respective negotiating positions of Serb authorities and the international community can, and does, have a disturbing impact on progress in dialogue with Belgrade on the final status of Kosovo.

Civil society can play a critical and constructive role in managing conflict and promoting real reconciliation across ethnic lines in Kosovo. Again, most civil society activity takes place at very local levels. Investments by international donors have resulted in the creation of a Kosovo NGO Advocacy Project (KNAP). Civil society groups have worked together to distribute jointly goods and services to the disadvantaged, the disabled and youth groups and to promote the shared needs of citizens from all ethnic groups. These NGO activities, which occur outside of the UNMIK pillars, constitute the most substantial links between the Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo today and offer hope for a common future.

### **UNMIK and Developing a Tolerant Society**

The most effective attempts at fostering real integration of ethnic groups in Kosovo have taken place at the local level. Until the March 2004 violence, UNMIK enjoyed modest success in Mitrovica/a, opening a city-wide dialogue and holding local problem-solving exercises with significant Albanian and Serb participation. Furthermore, in municipalities like Gjilane, the assembly leadership includes ethnic Serbs and other minority representatives. The power-sharing arrangement has resulted in shared access for all ethnic communities to municipal decision-making and international resources. At the municipal level, where political trust between ethnic groups can be established, and where there are real and recognizable gains to be made for members of all ethnic groups—improved delivery of shared services, and improvements in common utilities or resources—the greater return of minority communities can be encouraged and real reintegration at the political, social and economic level can be effected.

## Timor-Leste

East Timor—governed by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) from the departure of Indonesian civil and military forces in 1999 until independence in May 2002—presently hosts the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET). While under UN administration, national democratic institutions, including a parliament, a judiciary and a national government, were established, and national elections for a president and a constitutional assembly were held prior to independence and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

The process by which East Timor gained independence was a long one riddled with conflict—from the initial forcible annexation of the disputed region by Indonesia in 1975 following decolonization of the territory by Portugal. For 24 years, Jakarta ruled the province, with armed conflict between resistance/independence fighters, the Indonesian military and pro-Indonesian factions in Timor. After extensive negotiations at the UN, a popular referendum in 1999 set the stage for the country's independence, even as transitional violence morphed into widespread turmoil, resulting in the displacement of thousands of refugees and extensive destruction in the capital city, Dili. Militia violence and general insecurity prompted the intervention of the international community to stabilize the situation and to allow the deployment of UNTAET to put the country on the road to independence and post-war recovery.

### Creating Democracy Anew

Under the guidance of UNTAET, the Timorese deliberated on a new constitution—adopted in 2002—and held widely acclaimed democratic elections in which champions of independence were elected with broad support. On 20 May 2002, the country was declared independent. However, following decades of social tension and violence, Timor-Leste faces myriad challenges with regard to reconstruction, development and poverty eradication and reconciliation.

Together with UNTAET, the World Bank's Community Empowerment Program (CEP), established in March 2000, resulted in the election of village councils which approved the distribution of development assistance and the formation of development committees at suco and sub district level for reconstruction and assistance activities. These elected councils were limited to the CEP related activities of reconstruction and develop-

ment and expressly did not have “the legislative, executive or judicial power of government.” Nonetheless, the timely success of this intervention identified the need in post-conflict Timor for effective elected governance structures below the national level.

The establishment and development of local governance and democracy are recognized as fundamental to the overall success of the international community's democratization efforts in Timor-Leste. Democratization at the local level is an important aspect of the UN's work in Timor-Leste. The central authority supports a decentralized system of government, as stipulated in the Constitution of Timor-Leste. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is currently assisting the government in preparing for elections at the *Suco*-level, the 442 villages that make up the closest level of governance in Timor-Leste. These elections, for *Suco* chiefs and councils, will occur on a rolling basis between December 2004 and May 2005. Most critically, UNDP is in consultation with the Ministry for State Administration to develop mid-level, democratically elected representative governance, either at the district or sub-district level.

A Political Committee comprising the prime minister and government ministers takes decisions on local governance for the government. An Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group for Local Governance meets on a regular basis and is the chief point of liaison for the UNDP working group. Serious concerns have been expressed regarding implementation of local democratic institutions in Timor-Leste, where few, if any, presently exist. In this regard, Timor-Leste, the UN's largest state-building effort to date, demonstrates the dilemmas associated with exporting democracy.

### Local Service Delivery in Timor-Leste

For the majority of Timorese, who live in villages and rural hamlets with weak transport and communication links, such a centralized and often autocratic system can result in poor delivery of services, especially to populations located in remote and hard to reach areas. Notwithstanding the gains made in establishing national institutions of democracy and governance for the newly independent East Timor since 1999, traditional chiefs and *Suco* leaders continue to embody governance at the local level, with varying degrees of political legitimacy and underscoring the critical need for added and increased representative governance and political innovation.

A basic limitation of the transitional UNTAET mission was to have simultaneous responsibilities for both the administration and governance of a nation emerging from conflict and the creation of new institutions for a newly democratic and independent East Timor. One of the greatest nation-building challenges faced by UNTAET was to set up institutions of democracy with little information on, and knowledge of, what the public wants, and to ensure that the people of East Timor and the international community share the same concepts of democracy. Local observers and former senior UNTAET officials interviewed noted that the UN accomplished little during the transitional period in relation to establishing democratic structures or institutions below the national level.<sup>12</sup>

### Challenges for Local Democracy

With UNMISSET, the follow-on mission to the UN transitional administration, UN agencies such as UNDP were given a more significant part to play, as the administrative roles and capacities of UNTAET were handed over to the government. As such, the Timor-Leste Ministry for State Administration leads the process and determines the timetable for development of local governance, relying on UNDP for consultation in an advisory relationship. The ministry confronts the same challenges in considering local democracy as did UNTAET, and must weigh the presumed benefits of the creation of local democratic institutions and structures against the financial constraints on the new government of a developing nation.

Nonetheless, all parties generally accept that a system of local democratic governance is vital to the efficient, effective and accountable delivery of services necessary for the development of Timor-Leste. It is well recognized that the present highly centralized system of district administrators does not offer opportunities for democratic expression or for legitimate input from the citizenry. Hearings held in 2003 for the Presidential Dialogue on Local Power identified many of the shortcomings of the present system.

Presently, Timor-Leste's district and sub-district administrators are appointed by the central Ministry for State Administration and implement decisions made at the ministry level, with little accountability to, and few inputs from, local constituents. This 'de-concentrated' system of governance stems from the traditions of East Timor's

past history, closest in structure to the appointed Bupatis of the Indonesian occupation and the District Chefes of the Portuguese colonialist period.

It is extremely important to increase participation by segments of the population of Timor-Leste that have historically been underrepresented at the local level and to implement special provisions to ensure representation of specific and unique communities within Timor-Leste. Strategies should be considered to increase the political participation of young persons, who make up more than one-half of the population, and women, who have traditionally been left out of decision-making, particularly at the *Suco* level, by offering reserved seats or specific quotas, in proposed electoral structures for *Suco*- and district-level governance. Some geographical regions, including Atauro and Oecussi, should be offered considerable decision-making autonomy to ensure service delivery for their residents and the full benefits of decentralization.

### Evaluating Timor-Leste

The UN and its agencies can support the development of a culture of democracy at the local level of Timor-Leste that is open, transparent and inclusive. The establishment of democratic institutions and the anchoring of democratic principles at the local level, including respect for human rights, directly benefit all in Timor-Leste by strengthening democracy. Along with assistance for the promotion of democracy within local government, UN agencies can also ensure that its other nation-building and support activities promote a culture of democracy in Timor-Leste. Support for the rule of law, capacity building for an independent judiciary and media, and security sector training and reform can all include democratic components and can operate at the local level of Timorese government and society.

A structure of local democratic governance, rooted in the distinct variations of Timorese communities, will, in time, establish public municipal forums and community entities for citizens and civil society and promote the strengthening of a professional and responsive civil service within government administrations.

### Theme I: Human Security and Human Rights

The creation of local democratic structures can greatly assist ongoing processes of reconciliation and repa-

<sup>12</sup> Interview with the author (Risley).

triation following East Timor's long period of conflict and occupation. The present work of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CRTR), which has perhaps been most successful in developing a village-by-village approach to sustained reconciliation, especially between parties to the violence of 1999, demonstrates the importance of local and community reconciliation and dispute resolution methods and recognition of the significance of incorporating traditional mechanisms into these processes.

At the same time, democratic safeguards can prevent or reduce the impacts of traditional governance that may ignore segments of the population or actually promote further human rights violations, especially in relation to the treatment of women by male-dominated traditional *Suco*-level power structures. Integrating critical democratic principles of transparency, accountability and respect for human rights into traditional governance mechanisms will initiate the process to deepen a culture of democracy in Timor-Leste. Adding a new level of representative government at the district or sub-district level will help to consolidate that democracy.

Despite the likely end of the mandate for the CRTR in 2005, efforts must be made to engender a national spirit of reconciliation and to allow the process of reconciliation to continue, especially at the local level and through local institutions of governance and with traditional authority participation.

## **Theme II: Service Delivery**

The government and the Ministry for State Administration can focus on the immediate goals of promoting wider participation within and through existing local structures, such as *Suco*-level traditional government, and via the responsibilities of present district administrators. Increasing visiting hours, formalizing community outreach and holding regular public meetings and hearings for specific constituencies can instantly increase the transparency and accountability of existing methods of governance.

Civil society groups and local and internationally supported development organizations are often at the forefront of efforts to ensure the delivery of crucial services for citizens, especially those living in remote or sparsely populated areas. Advocacy by such bodies and their community members is often a vital and positive input for government and community-level decision-making. As local government structures are considered, by both the government task force and by the international community, the promotion of non-governmental democratic

institutions and principles, such as transparency, due process and a free and fair media, must also be accepted and incorporated into overall strategies.

## **Theme III: Frameworks of Governance**

In promoting the broader conditions that would facilitate local democracy, UNMISSET, UNDP, and other organizations should advance a consistent message in support of transparent and inclusive local and municipal institutions that can act autonomously but remain integrated into a broader structure of Timor-wide institutions. A consistent message is critical to ensuring that support for decentralization and democratic governance remains a priority for the Timor-Leste government.

Democratic governance proposals, while formulated by the Ministry for State Administration, UNDP and others, should be considered through popular consultations chaired by elected representatives of the Timor-Leste citizenry. Similar to the recent work of the CRTR and the Presidential Dialogue on Local Power, hearings could be held that invite the participation of local- and district-level audiences across Timor-Leste before local government proposals are ratified by parliament.

Introduced levels of elected governance must represent all segments of the population of Timor-Leste, and reflect the particular or unique needs of specified areas, such as Oecussi, as well as the needs of specific populations. The greater political participation of youth is vital to national efforts to lesson social conflict and to consolidate the broad gains of independence and democracy. Proposals for elected district governments should include the authority for elected officials to make decisions in all areas of defined responsibility without the interference of other public administration bodies. UNDP should support an electoral reform process that would increase the accountability of local officials to constituencies in their communities. It can offer assistance with considering local governance proposals that might include single district representation, especially to municipal or built-up areas.

## **Theme IV: Practicing Participation**

In developing information campaigns on how local government functions, and how citizens can effectively participate in local government, the international community should provide financial and technical assistance to NGOs for monitoring the performance of local government. Aid should be targeted at existing civil society and community development entities that have demonstrated organizational capacity, assisting

them in developing public programmes of civic awareness and projects to inform citizens of Timor-Leste of the possibilities of advocating for the development of democratic local government institutions.

Support should continue for the promotion of women as elected members of the district-level government and to ensure that women candidates are elected in forthcoming *Suco*-level polls. The use of quotas or set aside seats can and should be considered at all levels of elected representation. The UN and its agencies can support community-based training initiatives for women candidates and for candidates and organizations representing other disadvantaged populations (youth, war veterans and returning displaced persons).

The development of a new local government structure for Timor-Leste should be informed by public opinion, through a process of local-level consultation and prior to parliamentary debate and decisions on a final accepted approach. Choices with respect to the responsibilities of different levels of government, the types of services to be offered at those levels, the roles of elected representatives and the kinds of elections and democratic representative mechanisms to be utilized should be informed by inputs from local residents, civil society representatives and all other citizens of Timor-Leste.

## Other cases

### Macedonia

In Macedonia, local democracy building through decentralization of power has been embraced as a principal peace-building approach in internationally brokered agreements among the disputing factions. The peace plan, known as the Ohrid Framework Agreement (signed on 13 August 2001), devolves authority from the central government in Skopje to ease tensions between the restive Albanian minority and ethnic (Slavic) Macedonians, which have been dominant in the country since independence in 1990 following the dissolution of the SFRY. Key elements of the accord include revising territorial demarcations within the country and reform of the municipalities to increase their autonomy from central government.

The pact was reached following extensive mediation efforts by the European Union, OSCE and the USA in mid-2001, with implementation of the security provisions falling to NATO. For the preceding six months, Macedonia had teetered on the brink of full-scale civil war; some 200 people had died in clashes between its security forces and Albanian rebels and around 100,000 were exiled or internally displaced. Tensions between the Albanian minority and the ethnic Macedonian majority population transformed into violent confrontation fuelled by persistent high unemployment among

### Ohrid Framework Agreement: Key Provisions Concerning Local Democracy and Peace-building

- The country's multi-ethnic status was confirmed in constitutional language that guarantees the rights of all constituent peoples (including other minorities, such as Roma, Turks and Vlach) to cultural autonomy, full citizenship and dignity, together with 'equitable representation'.
- Ethnic Albanian Macedonians, comprising approximately 25 per cent of the country's two million people, are given greater control of local authorities in municipalities in which they are a majority, principally in the western part of the country. Macedonia's former 123 municipalities were re-designed with new boundaries based on the results of a new census to determine the make-up of society.
- Laws that affect the power and functioning of local authorities, and local elections, are subject to power-sharing decision rules in the national parliament, such that a majority of both communities must reach agreement before fundamental changes can be made to local-level autonomy.
- Local officials will have considerable authority to appoint and oversee local chiefs of police, although the overall functioning of the police remains the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior.
- Albanian will be a second official language in municipalities in which there are more than 20 per cent ethnic Albanians, which includes the capital. For example, street signs and public documents will appear in both languages. (In communities in which at least 20 per cent of the population speak other languages, those languages will also have official status.)

Albanians, perceptions of Slavic domination of the central government political process, and the spilling over of instability from neighbouring Kosovo.

Earlier in the 1990s, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) had helped to keep the peace in the volatile region bordering Kosovo. In 2001, the international community also acted in a conflict prevention manner to keep tensions over Albanian claims for greater independence and possibly secession from the multi-ethnic Macedonian state from escalating into a broader war in the country.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement illustrates the ways in which local democracy building was seen as the key to peace. Its terms reveal a strategy of peacemaking to preserve the country's territorial integrity through decentralization and autonomy, to ensure equal treatment of minorities in political life, and to balance minority aspirations with majority prerogatives (which has proven the most difficult part of the accord to implement). The pact called for constitutional reform, changes in legislation affecting municipal governance, and a timetable for implementation.

After considerable political wrangling, the terms of the accord establishing local reform as the basis of peace finally became law on 24 January 2002.

The Ohrid pact has generated significant opposition, particularly among Macedonian political factions opposed to the decentralization measures and to the terms that provide for an enhanced role for minorities. Macedonian nationalist politicians argued that it threatens the national identity of the state, panders to minority extremists and undermines the territorial integrity of the state. In sum, ethnic Macedonians contended that the ruling politicians who had negotiated the agreement under international pressure had sold out with respect to their own community's interest in maintaining coherence in the newly independent country. Added to these concerns are fears that Macedonia's neighbours have ages-old territorial designs on the small state.

Resentment has delayed, but not fully scuttled, the Ohrid accord. Continued international pressure to implement it—as a condition for NATO membership and for enhanced trade ties and eventual EU membership—has been an essential element of compliance on the part of the Macedonian government and Albanian political factions.

The deal faced a crucial test in November 2004, when rejectionist political forces in the Macedonian parlia-

ment managed to secure a public referendum on the agreement. It was widely feared that, with an ethnic Macedonian majority, the country's public would vote down—on a majority rule basis—the carefully negotiated power-sharing and decentralization provisions. It was not to be, though. On 7 November, Macedonians were asked to vote in a referendum on repealing the decentralization laws at the heart of the treaty. Remarkably, a very low turnout—26 per cent—meant that the required minimum turnout necessary for the referendum to have a binding effect (50 per cent) was not reached, and hence the effort failed. Both the Macedonian government and the international community had urged voters to boycott the poll, leaving the way open to full implementation of the agreement.

The lessons of Macedonia's experience with local democracy and peace-building are informative:

- local democracy building can serve as a vehicle for the negotiation of competing claims among ethnic minorities and majorities by providing for autonomy and self-determination for aggrieved communities within the constraints of territorial integrity;
- power-sharing formulae that protect local autonomy and that require consensus-oriented decision-making on local issues are a way to foster bargaining, compromise and balance between minority rights and majority prerogatives;
- early intervention by the international community to promote dialogue and negotiation on local-level democracy, followed by security guarantees and disarmament, can tip the balance toward peace in societies experiencing internal conflict; and
- by focusing (peace-making) attention on the local-level sources of conflict (economic underdevelopment, minority grievances and policing and security), the peace-building effort can help ameliorate the fundamental insecurities that gave rise to violent opposition in Macedonia. In this way, localized causes of conflict can be addressed through localized solutions in each municipality.

## Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's tragic civil war began in 1991, the same year that the country adopted a new constitution calling for multiparty elections. The rebel force that began seizing territory from the weak government of President Joseph Saidu Momoh, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), would go down in history as one of the most brutal. The plundering of diamonds, rape and

mutilation, use of child soldiers and attacks on innocent civilians led to its late leader, Foday Sankoh, being indicted by an international court for crimes against humanity. The slide into civil war was marked by a series of military coups, the siege of Freetown (the capital), rigged and failed elections, intervention by international troops—under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)—and the complete failure of the state to provide for human security or to meet basic development needs.

The disconnection between democracy and conflict management has been all too apparent in war-torn Sierra Leone. In 1996, elections in the absence of a peace accord represented a further turning point in the slide into deeper civil war. The polls produced a brief opportunity for peace, as newly elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah struck a deal with Sankoh's RUF. The peace did not last, however. After a short respite, the war grew more intense until international forces intervened to implement the shaky Lomé Agreement of July 1999 that sought to establish peace. After fighting their way into the Sierra Leone interior, British and subsequently UN troops finally, in 1999, stabilized the traumatized country. UNSC Resolution 1270 authorized the intervention in 1999; the Security Council laid out a broad set of peace-building mandates, including humanitarian aid delivery, disarmament and demobilization of soldiers, prosecution of war crimes, and the advancement of democracy through multiparty elections.

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the most recent and thus far successful UN peacekeeping force, has provided peace and stability since 2000, allowing for national presidential and parliamentary elections in 2002 and local elections in May 2004. In a remarkable post-war election, Kabbah, the victor in 1996, was returned to power in a landslide UN-managed poll. Nonetheless, many observers viewed the 2002 national elections as simply legitimizing the winners of the conflict and restoring the authority of the political old guard, rather than genuinely opening or restoring channels for dialogue and potential reconciliation, which a functioning democracy might permit.

Local democracy in Sierra Leone has been advanced as a peacemaking strategy. In March 2004, a Local Government Act was passed with the strong support of the international community and with the aid of UNDP. The act effectively paired a peace-building strategy in Sierra Leone, like in Macedonia, as a way

to open new channels of representative government in the war-torn provinces and to decentralize governance and political power in Sierra Leone as part of an approach to conflict management.

The law led to landmark elections in the political, economic and social realms of Sierra Leone. Elections for district council seats were held throughout the country in May 2004, with oversight and management provided by UNDP. The two principle political parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), presently in power, and the All People's Congress (APC), in opposition, a number of smaller parties, and several new independent political forces contested the seats.

- *Autonomy.* District councillors are the newest level of governance in what is proposed to be a decentralized government. The responsibilities and authority of the new district councils are still not clear. Financial authority will require that newly elected councillors are trained in budgeting, and application of the Local Government Act will require that it is published and that there is open consideration of local budgets. A key goal of political reform and governance since the end of the conflict has been the reconstitution of the municipalities to increase their autonomy from central government.
- *Rebuilding the state.* Local democracy building can be instrumental in rebuilding a failed or shadow state. Decentralization can help to extend the legitimacy of the state through closer connection to citizens and through better service delivery. Some regional or district differences can be positively encouraged to improve overall service delivery and transparency in the sphere of political power. Political reform of Sierra Leone can also have the greatest impact at the local level, where traditional rules regarding land access, property rights and gender issues can be revised to ensure equal treatment of women and to increase opportunities for youth, a majority in a population of six million.
- *Fostering women's participation.* One focus at the local level is on increasing the political participation of women as part of the democratization and decentralization of local government. Specific obstacles to increasing the political participation of women, such as the country's traditional and often exclusive male-dominated political culture and religious and local community barriers, need to be overcome as local government is applied

in Sierra Leone. Additionally, the dominance of male leadership of the armed forces in the political system over the past ten years of civil conflict has raised significant barriers to the equal political participation of women, who traditionally have not been part of public safety or military units.

- *Youth engagement.* As nearly one-half of the population is under 25, a critical challenge for Sierra Leone is to bring its youth into national and local political institutions and civic organizations to protect society and state from a possible resumption of conflict. Sierra Leone is a good example of the nexus between development, democracy and conflict prevention, underscoring the need to find viable alternatives to conflict-related activities for at-risk youth in Freetown and across Sierra Leone. A fundamental political issue for the newly elected district councillors is to promote local community economic development, as well as to support employment goals for community youth, especially to prevent youth from re-entering potentially violent or conflict-prone groups and organizations.
- *Institution building.* Decentralization and the rebuilding of other democratic institutions will also be critical as the Local Government Act is implemented. Establishing competent and capable local courts, de-concentration of the national judiciary system and the development of community-level judicial alternatives and dispute resolution mechanisms will greatly assist the work of the new district councils. So far, most internationally funded programmes to increase the capacity of local judicial structures have failed in Sierra Leone due to the enormous gap in education and training, and the incredible problem of corruption and insecurity. Support for national anti-corruption campaigns at the local level is essential as financial authority is decentralized to the district level. Issues that will fall to some extent within the scope of responsibilities of the district councils are access to healthcare, the creation of education opportunities and market-place regulation.
- *Role of traditional leaders.* The role of paramount chiefs is partially addressed in the Local Government Act and a reform process for this most local form of governance has started, in parallel with district council elections. Developing a common framework and approach to determine the authority of paramount chiefs is vital in

Sierra Leone. Most power still rests in the hands of such a traditional leadership, the members of which are often appointed, selected according to hereditary and mostly male lineage or elected using narrowly proscribed lists that state who can vote in specific villages and regions. Among the issues to be considered are new more democratic approaches to the election of paramount chiefs for rural areas and the establishment of a sub-district, municipal level of government for towns and built-up areas.

- *Land reform.* Other traditional forms of power are also coming under review via the Local Government Act, including the critical matter of access to land, which mostly occurs according to male lineage and traditional hierarchies. A more progressive approach, which may become possible as local governance is applied in Sierra Leone, will grant more direct property rights to persons using land plots, or who in some instances have occupied land for years, or by making good use through cultivation.
- *Regional linkages and spillover effects.* Regional issues strongly effect Sierra Leone's transition to peace. The outbreak of war in Côte d'Ivoire and social weakness in Liberia threaten to undermine Sierra Leone's fragile peace. Overall, the stabilization and strengthening of Mano River Union regional institutions are essential to advancing peace in Sierra Leone.
- *A far-sighted international community.* International guarantees of a long-term security presence and assistance are essential to stability in Sierra Leone. Also critical is continued emphasis on development, security and peace-building as principal benefits of local democracy and decentralization. Local democracy building can serve as a vehicle for the negotiation of land use reform property rights, and the sharing of community resources, issues on which the views of women and youth need to be heard. International security and development guarantees to ensure a continued focus on achieving real decentralization and the establishment of democratic institutions at the local level through which elected district councils are able to provide safe and secure communities.

## **Liberia**

### **Conflict, democracy and the restoration of basic services for returning refugees**

Local democracy can be critical to the early restoration of services and to the rebuilding of society and the economy in a country recovering from conflict. After 14 years of conflict, Liberia demonstrates the real need for local governance and elected representation at the municipal level, which can generate the community empowerment necessary to manage the social transformations that the rebuilding of the nation will entail.

In 2005, Liberia recently emerged from 14 years of conflict that had left this once prosperous West African state now probably the poorest country on the earth, not even meriting a ranking on the UNDP human development scale, as statistics and data do not exist for the nation of three million people. Nearly one million other Liberians were living outside the country as refugees or within it as displaced persons as a result of the civil war, residing and receiving food in UN-backed camps. Liberia's roads, railroads, ports, rubber-processing factories and other infrastructure are almost completely destroyed or purged by successive armies during the conflict—looting was so extensive that even the once-impressive national electric power grid was sold for scrap metal. Logging and diamond mining, two key employment and foreign revenue-generating sectors of the Liberian economy, were stagnant during the conflict, as UN Security Council sanctions remained in place to prevent their exploitation by the country's warring factions. The international community remains fearful that such revenues could again assist the now ex-warlords in purchasing weapons and re-igniting the conflict.

At the local level, life remains constrained by the devastation caused by the conflict. Monrovia, a city of nearly one million people, had neither electric power nor running water, with residents relying on shallow wells dirtied by sewage for drinking water. Cholera was endemic within the capital. Outside of Monrovia, education and healthcare services are only slowly being restored to larger towns in the closer-in counties—as of April 2005, three counties still did not have functioning healthcare clinics, supporting several hundred thousand people. The limited healthcare that is available is entirely offered by international NGOs or UN peacekeepers. The infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. Liberia is the most glaring global example of a 'failed state' now supported by international donors and a large UN peacekeeping force.

Security after the signing of the 2003 Accra Peace Accord, overseen by ECOWAS, was restored through the deployment of 15,000 UN peacekeepers, following the departure of President Charles Taylor, indicted by an international court and headed for exile in Nigeria. A disarmament process overseen by the UN was completed in November 2004, which saw 110,000 combatants and their supporters surrender weapons and agree to demobilize what had been three separate warring factions. The first quarter of 2005 witnessed the start of the return, both spontaneous and with UNHCR assistance, of thousands of displaced Liberians, some having lived in camps outside of the country for ten years or more. Many of the returning Liberians crowded into Monrovia, increasing the demand for services there. Further returns to villages and towns across Liberia are expected to place greater strain and a greater burden on the non-existent or just functioning social services and infrastructures available in the 14 counties outside of Monrovia.

More than 600,000 Liberians left their home communities during the years of conflict, which saw fighting and violence in virtually every community. Two counties that suffered especial devastation due to fighting were Lofa and Nimba, to which thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons began to return following the final disarmament of combatants in November 2004.

With international attention and funding focused on guaranteeing successful Liberian national elections for a president and legislative assembly in October 2005, the UN and international donors have devoted little attention to democracy at the local level. Historically, Liberia's limited interpretation of democracy rarely included elections other than at the national level, with its 15 counties ruled by all-powerful superintendents appointed by the central government. Even before the 14 years of conflict, Liberia's ruling governments were represented in the counties by individuals who were considered to be the 'eyes and ears' of the president, and responsible for the allocation of what rare resources the ruling elite in Monrovia chose to share with a mostly disenfranchised rural population. At times, Liberia has seen attempts, mostly failed ones, to elect through popular voting the mayor of the capital and the larger towns.

A deepening of democracy could entail the extension of representative elected governance to the 15 counties through the establishment of county legislative assemblies and the direct election of mayors in the municipalities and villages of Liberia. Ceding greater political responsibility to communities outside of the

capital via a process of political decentralization can advance development and post-conflict reconstruction initiatives with a greater degree of efficiency and transparency. Revenue that may in future be derived from natural resource extraction (the mining of diamonds, gold and iron ore, logging and rubber cultivation) by multinational corporations must be allocated to, or shared with, communities across all counties, rather than siphoned off by Monrovia-based government elites as has traditionally been the case.

Services for residents of Liberian communities are presently delivered through the UN or international NGOs: healthcare clinics are operated by Médecins Sans Frontières, supplemental food packages are distributed by the World Food Programme, and public safety and security is offered by UN peacekeepers and, where deployed, Liberian national police units. Host communities will have to provide basic services, shelter, employment opportunities and security for returning persons, with populations rising dramatically and rapidly as spontaneous returns increase. The establishment of even rudimentary forms of democratic governance can improve the ability of communities to respond to the stress and increased needs of returning populations.

A critical phase of rebuilding by the international community to begin in mid-2005 will intensify efforts to reconstruct community schools and clinics, and to fund fully reintegration programmes designed to keep ex-combatants in school, to fund education and training programmes, or to provide ex-combatants with start-up tools, seeds and supplies for farming. Communities can best be assisted by providing direct support for vital services, such as wells and infrastructure (roads, food and crop-processing equipment), which will aid community-level and family agricultural production. Community and village councils, with elected or endorsed representatives of all persons and groups within a particular community, can ensure that decisions on these very critical services are made with the needs of all residents in mind.

A Governance Reform Commission that was established by the National Transitional Government of Liberia held regular and well-attended public hearings throughout 2005, has indicated that there is much popular support for extending the democratic franchise to the sub-national levels. Key findings of the hearings include the need for an emphasis on decentralization and the shared allocation of government resources and international aid through the direct election of county superintendents and mayors of towns and cities.

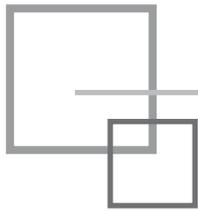
Meaningful development of democracy in Liberia must include a focus on the local level, ultimately including direct elections of county superintendents, the creation of legislative assemblies for the counties, and elections for town and municipal mayors. Traditional leadership, through paramount chiefs, can also be reformed, opening up such roles to women and to all tribal affiliations within specific communities, and clarifying and regularizing the power and mandate of traditional authorities. Especially with regard to land use and economic development issues, community-based, consensus-oriented and consultative-driven political processes at the community levels can assist the post-conflict transition and the restructuring of the society and economy, which will inevitably occur as thousands of refugees return to their communities.

Beyond representative government, the development of democracy below the national level should also focus on issues of criminal justice after years of impunity, on truth and reconciliation matters, and on reform of the judiciary, respect for the rule of law and strengthening of an independent press and media.

According to the UN mandate, the newly recreated Liberian National Police Service will provide law enforcement and public safety across the country, with recruits vetted and trained by the UN. Justice sector reform will require years of development, but the establishment of working courts at the county level could at least establish a minimal standard of rule of law to combat the impunity enjoyed over past decades by political elites.

Community-based approaches to truth telling and reconciliation can at least begin to offer a modicum of relief to victims and to refugees returning to villages where ex-combatants roam free.

Finally, an independent media, practically non-existent in a nation with a high rate of illiteracy (50–60 per cent), several distinct languages and dialects used by different ethnic groups, and too impoverished to support a broadcast television service, is represented outside Monrovia by community radio stations, often the only reliable source of information in scores of towns and villages. These broadcast stations, staffed by volunteers and powered by portable generators, can act as forums for candid discussion of community issues and can serve to ensure honesty and some degree of transparency among local decision-makers whether elected or appointed and that the voices of all residents are heard.



## Part III. Conclusions on Local Democracy and Peace-building

---

### Conclusions

Today's headlines suggest that the international community will continue to struggle with the real-world challenges of local democracy building as a strategy for peace. With significant peace processes being implemented in Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia and Sudan—and ongoing conflicts in areas like Chechnya, Colombia and Kashmir—the practical problems of promoting local democracy in post-war situations continue to raise larger questions about the relationships between peace-building and conflict management. Is decentralization, local institution and civil society building, and managing community-level economics a smart strategy for post-war peace-building? What balance should be struck between an emphasis on national-level strategies versus those that purport to be bottom up? Under what conditions does local-level democracy contribute to peacemaking?

Several overall findings have emerged in the comparative evaluations of the above case studies. These findings point to the need to conceive carefully strategies for local-level democratization and peacekeeping, which emphasize the prerequisite of security, core community needs, an electoral- and authority-strengthening process and community participation. From Kosovo, Liberia, Macedonia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, we can draw some important conclusions on when and how local democracy initiatives contribute to peace-building.

### Providing Security in Insecure Localities

- *Capable, autonomous, legitimate local authorities.* The creation of legitimate, capable, local-level authorities is critical to the delivery of humanitarian relief and essential services to war-weary populations, such as clean water, food, shelter and sanitation, as well as to the immediate tasks of restoration of infrastructure and the revival of an economy capable of providing citizens with the income necessary to meet essential survival needs. Most important, they play a role in providing for a community or municipal level accountability mechanism for the security forces.
- *Community-level human security.* Local-level authorities are also crucial for establishing security, preventing violence among still-hostile factions within the community, and enabling the creation of capacities for policing and community conflict management. Honest, fair, effective policing is essential. The absence of basic security in key localities can endanger incipient efforts to set up post-war national frameworks. Local community-level violence heightens insecurities, undermines moderation, and engenders threats to post-war governments and international peacekeepers alike.

## Peace-building and local democracy: comparing cases

	<i>Security/ human rights</i>	<i>Aid/ development institutions</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Prognosis</i>
Kosovo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided by international community; police forces created under OSCE guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial major refugee operation; resettlement; EU economic support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and provincial assemblies; two elections held</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still divided communities; political organizations and communities</li> </ul>
Timor-Leste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition to sovereignty has occurred; need for local community security, human rights protections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugee and humanitarian relief operations were successful, along with political transition</li> <li>• Still, endemic poverty and economic isolation; significant development needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy planning and evolution of local government structures is under way</li> <li>• New institutions take into account traditional structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good basis for local-level community building through existing structures of traditional society; ongoing reconciliation and community building</li> </ul>
Macedonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NATO security guarantees and ongoing European Union engagement have significantly contributed to stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-level conflict produced fewer humanitarian issues, but continuing development needed to promote social parity among groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ohrid accord establishes municipalities and sets standards for ensuring tolerance and participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voters backed peace agreement in 2004, lending a strong positive push to the implementation of the peace agreement in the years ahead</li> </ul>
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities remain at risk from instabilities due to root causes of conflict; ongoing international involvement in human security is essential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition from humanitarian to development aid, especially at the local level; enduring economic problems remain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New local structures created in 2004 give the new institutions of municipal government a first-ever chance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sierra Leone's society is complex and still deeply divided; careful strategies needed to promote community capacities</li> </ul>
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A UN Peacekeeping Mission assists a transitional government;</li> <li>• 15,000 peacekeepers with Chapter 7 enforcement power; 1,000 international police; international training of new Liberian police and security forces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Massive refugee returns and humanitarian operations underway; EU and USA provide most support;</li> <li>• Poverty, illiteracy, war destruction, looting, corruption and lack of employment are major barriers to post-conflict recovery</li> <li>• Warlords and ex-combatants seek continued power in culture of impunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National elections scheduled for October;</li> <li>• County-level Superintendents appointed by transitional government;</li> <li>• No local- or village-level elections planned</li> <li>• Heavily centralized and corrupt state agencies and governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented communities with 16 ethnic groupings and languages;</li> <li>• Liberians are exhausted by conflict; peace is easier;</li> <li>• Overly centralized economy and government provides few goods and services to communities outside of Monrovia</li> </ul>

- It should be kept in mind that effective and accountable local policing is one of the objectives most difficult to achieve in a post-conflict environment. Political or ethnic factions, corrupt and prone to human rights violations, most often control existing police forces (if they exist at all). Yet, community-level security remains a vital element of any environment supportive of local democracy building. Until local security forces are properly trained and deployed, the ‘security gap’ will need to be filled by international security assistance.

### Delivering Humanitarian Relief and Basic Services

- *Development aid and democracy promotion are mutually reinforcing.* Ensuring that the delivery of humanitarian relief is transparent, accountable and involves beneficiaries, relating directly to local authorities, knowing local partners and structures and understanding needs on the ground are precisely those principles that allow the international community to contribute directly to local democracy. International humanitarian aid in immediate terms, and reconstruction and development aid in the intermediate and long-term, are critical to building capacity to satisfy essential human needs. Without a close link between the international community and local service delivery channels, peace-building will be unsuccessful.

### Designing Frameworks for Conflict Managing Local Governance

- *Options for avoiding ‘winner-takes-all’ democracy.* Peace-building requires a careful democratization strategy: societies are torn, trust is low, and fears are rampant. Municipal councils, as collective decision-making bodies, lend themselves to inclusion and consensus-oriented problem solving. Provided that these councils can be strengthened, resourced and managed by international community administrators, as in the case studies presented here, they offer significant possible opportunities for promoting democracy while also promoting peace. Proportionality in terms of representation, community and sub-community, and consensus-oriented decision-making are the key goals to pursue.

- The sequencing of national and local elections is an important issue that should be carefully considered in each particular case, taking into account specific historical and geopolitical circumstances. In some instances, the holding of local elections before national ones may be the appropriate solution, leading to the establishment of legitimate authorities and to a bottom-up consensus-oriented dialogue process at the local level. In other cases—for example when the electorate in multi-ethnic or multi-cultural states is strongly homogenized on identity matters and manipulated by local ‘conflict entrepreneurs’—local elections may result in the ‘legitimization’ and the strengthening of the belligerent’s authority and in mutually hostile local leaderships in different parts of the country, thus becoming the recipe for civil war.
- *Balancing decentralization and fragmentation.* There is an abiding tension between the demands of providing autonomy to local communities and providing power and prerogatives to central government. There is no single formula for peace builders with respect to striking the appropriate balance. In some communities, local power is essential to peace, generally tolerant, and should be fostered. However, when local power is intolerant, potentially injurious to other communities, or where exceptional autonomy or secession is likely to create new majorities (as in Kosovo), decentralization can work against the objectives of both democracy and peace.

### Engaging Civil Society in Peace and Democracy Promotion

- *Community integration is a long road.* Peace-building is by definition a long-term enterprise. In many of the conflicts of the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is no magic moment of ‘consolidation’ of peace agreements: most societies that experienced war are still very divided, tense, and at risk of a recurrence of conflict along well-established lines. Long-haul peace-building by the international community may help communities to integrate, but reconciliation, a common civil society and local tolerance are unlikely to develop quickly. Local-level events, such as in Mitrovica/a, remind us that peace is often slight, and tensions lie just below the surface.

- *Youth: the next generation.* Critical to long-term peace at the local level is to engage perhaps the most essential segment of society: youth. International peace-building and democratization programmes may well be most successful when targeted at young men and women who look to the future, who recognize the costs of conflict, and who eschew the enmities that drove older generations to war. The underlying causes of conflict that will ensure that they remain vulnerable to war, however, will persist unless both the democracy-building and peace-building enterprises are both successful over time.