Berghof Foundation

Paving the Way for the Effective and Inclusive Implementation of Peace Accords

A Strategic Framework

This strategic framework was developed during the 8th Meeting on Negotiations entitled *The Implementation of Accords and the Role of International Third Parties* held in October 2016, in Berlin. It provides an overview of some of the most frequent challenges Resistance and Liberation Movements (RLMs) are facing with regard to the implementation phase of peace agreements and ways to overcome them. This overview aims at giving our readers the possibility to reflect and improve their strategies in the nexus of negotiation and implementation.

Why do some peace agreements fail, where others succeed? The inquiry of this intriguing question has driven leading practitioners, academics and experts throughout the field of peace research and conflict transformation for decades. While the stage of peace negotiations and questions on how to design negotiation processes hold a prominent spot in scientific literature and hand books, much less attention has been devoted to the issue of implementing peace accords. This notwithstanding the fact that more than 35% of all peace agreements between 1975 and 2011 were never implemented.[1] The implementation of accords remains a protracted undertaking and most often the devil lies in the detail. There are many reasons why peace accords are not implemented: Many peace accords fail because of insufficient guarantees and a lack of detailed implementation roadmaps, others fail to materialise because governments or RLMs lack the operational capacity, the capability or simply the will to adhere to agreed-upon principles.

Addressing the challenges of implementation during and after the negotiation stage remains of paramount importance to government officials as well as RLMs. Questions that need to be carefully addressed in this context are for instance:

- What are the factors that challenge or impede the process of implementation?
- How to design negotiation processes to allow for tangible peace dividends in the long-run?
- Under what conditions can political agreements begin to materialise?
- What are the technical challenges, potentials and trade-offs of a comprehensive implementation roadmap?
- What role can or should international third parties play to facilitate implementation?

Taking up and reflecting on these and other questions, we hope to provide insights to our readers on how to proactively address issues related to the implementation of accords and thereby contribute to more effective conflict transformation processes.

As one major output of our annual Meetings on Negotiations, our strategic frameworks are practical tools providing a structured and comprehensive overview on different themes related to political negotiations.

These papers are based on the input and the discussion among all meeting participants and enriched through additional desk-research and literature review. Recognising that each conflict scenario and negotiation situation is unique, the aim of these frameworks is not to provide any blue-print solution, but to present some ideas and lessons-learned from different international contexts that can be helpful for developing authentic and case-by-case approaches to negotiation challenges.

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[1] Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Peace Agreements 1975-2011 - Updating the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset, Uppsala University.
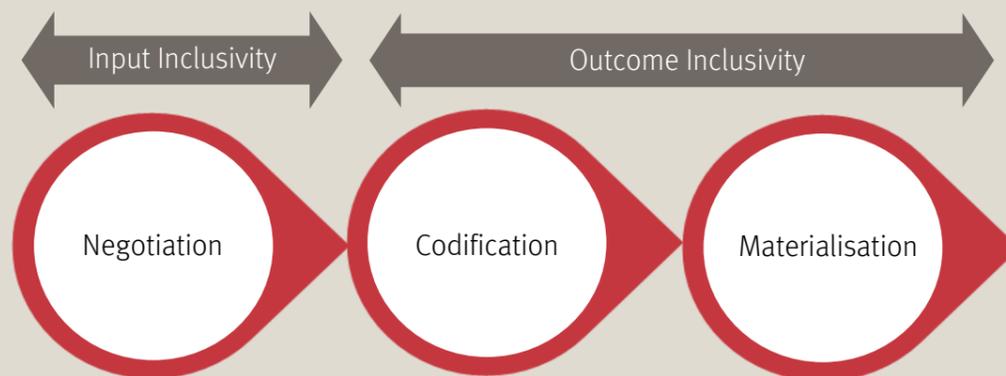
Inclusive and effective implementation: key aspects

Implementation What is it?

≡ The implementation of peace agreements refers to a stage of a peace process, where conflict parties have signed an accord and the **materialisation of post-war political settlements** takes place. Following pre-negotiations and formal negotiations, the different needs and interests of conflict parties' have already shaped the outlines, provisions and substance of the peace agreement. Based on these either enabling or limiting conditions, measures, steps and initiatives are carried out to translate the provisions of an agreement into tangible peace dividends.

≡ The implementation of peace agreements is a complex and multi-dimensional undertaking that involves a variety of societal actors and resources on different tracks over a varying period of time. While often separated for analytical purposes, the negotiation and implementation stage of a peace process highly intertwine.

From negotiation to materialisation arenas in peace processes:

≡ Empirical findings highlight the **strong link between political settlements, their materialisation and potential relapse into violence** with recurrent civil wars being the most dominant form of armed conflicts (up to 50% of all peace agreements breaking down within a period of 5 years).[2]

≡ Inclusivity (or a lack thereof) is the key to understand the **nexus between the input and outcome dimensions of a peace process**. Shortcomings in negotiations, such as the lack of inclusion of stakeholders or critical issues can seriously challenge effective implementation in the long-run.

Implementation An interrelated undertaking

Input Inclusivity | Outcome Inclusivity

Negotiation → Codification → Materialisation

≡ This paper will focus on the dimension of outcome inclusivity and highlight ways to overcome challenges of implementation by putting forward a holistic understanding of inclusive and effective implementation and highlighting factors that affect the long-term (in)stability of peace agreements.

There are different understandings that characterise the implementation of peace agreements and underpin the approach to long-term peace and stability:[3]

» The **constitutive approach** to implementation refers to comprehensive and all-encompassing peace agreements where precision of wording, feasibility and a detailed implementation schedule with clearly delineated responsibilities are decisive for the success of the peace process.

The **Guatemalan Peace Accords** (1996) are a good example for a constitutive approach as they provided a precise, detailed and comprehensive roadmap of steps to be taken by the conflict parties. The accords' provisions on the design of state institutions, national reconciliation as well as demobilization and integration of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (UNRG) formed landmark contributions to peace in Guatemala.

» **Instrumental approaches** follow the understanding that the agreement itself is only one step in a much longer process, emphasizing the paramount need to maintain momentum and consensus building through gradual accommodation between the peace agreement and the realities on the ground.

The **Burundi Peace Agreement** (2000) best exemplifies the instrumental approach. In the absence of crucial belligerent groups, a detailed and meaningful implementation roadmap was impossible to achieve. To move the process forward, exert pressure on non-signatories and eventually foster the conditions for an ongoing dialogue, the agreement was concluded in spite of these eye-striking deficiencies.

» **Trade-offs:** While the constitutive approach promotes a more detailed understanding of the peace process through comprehensive implementation roadmaps, its materialisation is often not feasible due to limited consensus and ongoing armed violence on the ground. The instrumental approach to implementing peace agreements can help to create a first momentum for peace processes by taking into account prevailing challenges and initiating a step-by-step approach towards ongoing dialogue.

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[2] See World Bank (2011). World Development Report 2011. Conflict, Security and Development. Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf.
[3] See Arnaut, Jean (2006). Good Agreement? Bad Agreement? An Implementation Perspective. Centre of International Studies, Princeton University, Princeton.

Inclusive and effective implementation: key aspects

What defines inclusive implementation?

≡ The dimensions of inclusivity in peace processes[4]

» The role of inclusivity in peace processes is dynamic, multi-dimensional and evolves over time, linking the negotiations of a peace settlement and its materialization in the post-war political arenas. The key question of effective and inclusive implementation remains **who** should be included in designing and carrying out peace processes, **at what stage** and **to what end**.

» In the nexus of inclusive and effective implementation, two broad aspects of inclusion are crucial, the **inclusion of actors** (social groups and sectors) and the **inclusion of issues**, namely the interests, needs and concerns of the relevant stakeholders in a peace process.

» With regard to actor inclusivity, one can distinguish between **horizontal** (relevant actors are represented at the table) and **vertical** (parties themselves represent different segments of their constituency) inclusivity. In contrast to **input inclusivity** (inclusive design of negotiation processes) **output inclusivity** refers to the materialisation and inclusive implementation of a peace agreement.

» As most implementation processes take several years to unfold, the framework conditions as well as the needs and concerns of actors tend to change significantly. Implementation roadmaps need to plan for, and cope with this time variance in order to be effective and inclusive in the long run.
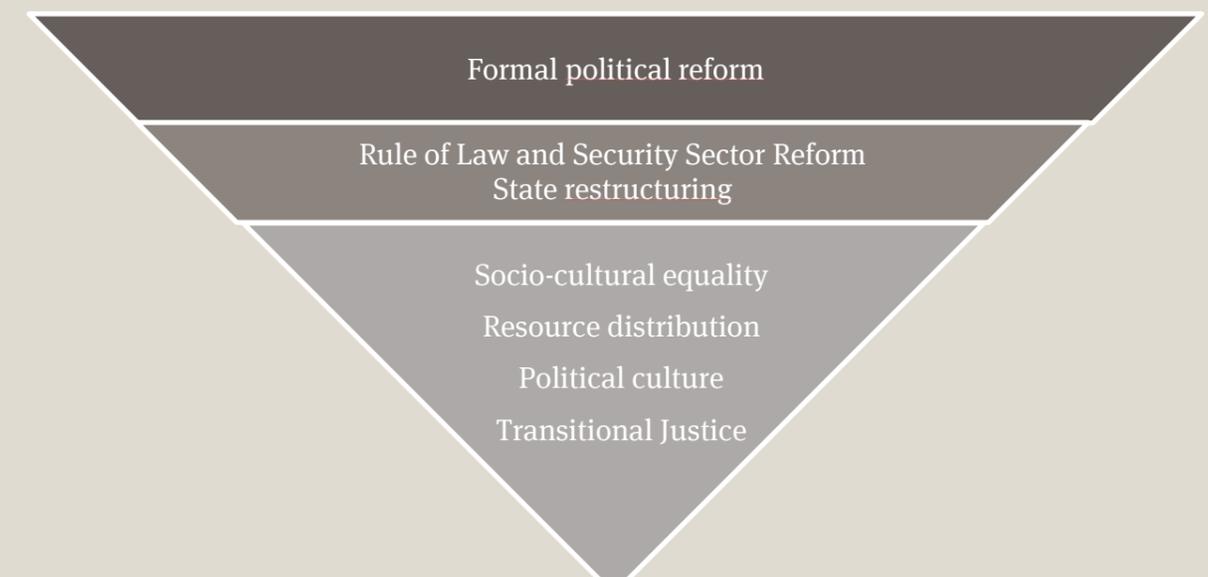
≡ From inclusive negotiations to effective implementation

» Notwithstanding the distinct features of input and outcome inclusivity, key conditions for peace roadmaps and the *rules of the game* for inclusive (or exclusive) implementation frameworks are established ex ante throughout the negotiations phase.

» As the needs and concerns of parties may vary over time, negotiation processes need to be designed in such a way that they go beyond the signing of the accord and deliver tangible peace dividends in the long-run.

» Anticipating challenges of implementation and contentions that may arise throughout the course of the peace process (e.g. growing power disparities, practical challenges in disarmament, demobilisation or reintegration) need to form the bedrock of designing peace negotiations.

» Coping with the dynamic change of parties and their needs over time thus requires formal or informal platforms for ongoing dialogue between actors that go beyond the end of official negotiations.

≡ From inclusive implementation to inclusive politics

» Experiences from numerous peace processes over the past decades have shown that the long-term viability and success of post-settlement policies in the nexus of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration and state/security sector reform are strongly correlated with their degree of inclusivity.

» Horizontal inclusion of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) such as RLMs in designing, monitoring and carrying out implementation represents a prerequisite for the longevity of peace processes. Providing inclusive space for the implementation of peace agreements is a key to guarantee that RLMs voluntarily relinquish their capacity to engage in armed rebellion while state authorities allow for a reform of the status-quo of governance and the use of force.

» At the same time, vertical inclusion has become a precondition for the public acceptance of many peace processes and post-war policies. Experiences from processes such as in the aftermath of the Nepali Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2006) have shown that top-down approaches may result in a lack of the national-local connect in post-war political arenas.

» Narrowing the vertical gap between authorities/post-war elites and local constituencies is crucial to improving the chances for resilient and lasting implementation of peace agreements and ensure a space for long-term political transformation within the various sectors of peace/state-building.

Effective vs. less effective materialisation of peace accords[5]

Formal political reform

Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform
State restructuring

Socio-cultural equality

Resource distribution

Political culture

Transitional Justice

[4] See Dudouet, Lundström (2015): Post-War Political Settlements: From Participatory Transition Processes to Inclusive Statebuilding and Governance Outcomes? Research Report. Berghof Foundation, Berlin.
[5] Visualization of the different segments of peace accords, from formal policy and political reforms to the socio-cultural dimension of transformation, that are more or less effectively materialized in peace processes, see Dudouet, Lundström (2015): Post-War Political Settlements: From Participatory Transition Processes to Inclusive Statebuilding and Governance Outcomes? Research Report. Berghof Foundation, Berlin.

Conditions for effective implementation

Numerous factors influence or even challenge the implementability of peace agreements, among them:

» **Contextual factors**, like the genuine nature of the conflict (resources, ethnicity, or political power), provisions foreseen in the peace accords (design and functioning of institutional mechanisms) as well as the degree of inclusivity within the various arenas of implementation;

» **Actor related features**, such as the internal cohesion of conflict parties, their political will and capacity to implement peace agreements as well as their political and social legitimacy;

» Also the degree of **support of international third parties** as guarantors of peace as well as political and institutional capacity-building actors has become an increasingly important variable when it comes to promoting effective implementation of peace agreements.

To pave the way for effective and inclusive implementation alongside these dimensions, the most crucial conditions for, and challenges of, materialisation of post-war settlements need to be thoroughly addressed, including:

≡ The capacity to implement agreed reforms

» Once agreement is reached, the former warring parties enter a new sphere of the peace processes where they are held accountable to actual policy performance. Bridging the gap between high expectations by actors involved in and/or affected by these policies and the realities on the ground is crucial to avoid frustration as well as anticipate and manage public discontent.

» Post-conflict societies are often confronted with a lack of material and financial resources. In such an environment the realistic assessment of intended results and limited financial capacity is of high importance to deal with major hindrances to state reform and the materialisation of inclusive governance.

» Beyond the questions of financial resources, the capacity of post-war elites to implement inclusive settlements also depends on their technical capacity to run, or take part in, state institutions. Most war veterans, especially within RLMs, are confronted with the challenge of coping with new needs and issues that go beyond their traditional sphere of engagement in armed struggles.

≡ Political Will

» The political will of post-war elites represents a factor that determines the effective materialisation of inclusive post-war governance. Experience from cases such as Colombia and Nepal show that shifting priorities and policy objectives of new power-holders may affect inclusive policy programmes and the will to transform post-war societies.

» The political will of power holders intertwines strongly with the degree of inter- and intraparty consensus on envisaged reforms. While decisions taken consensually within the new political settlement are more likely to be effectively materialised, decisions taken amidst inter- or intra-party polarization might fail in the stage of implementation.

» Often the materialisation of inclusive governance items is subjected to interference by traditional elites and other informal actors. Socio-economic elites that exert control over institutions and channels of authority may counter political reforms if their interest and needs are not being taken into account by the new post-war elites.

≡ Institutional or procedural mechanism

» Inclusive materialisation is also linked to the presence or absence of institutional or procedural mechanisms that are able to prevent blockages and winner-takes-all-monopolies in post-war political arenas. Furthermore, these mechanisms can help to establish a platform for continued dialogue among political and social stakeholders on crucial issues.

» The longevity of post-war settlements often requires binding implementation mechanisms that integrate peace accords into a legal framework. In El Salvador, the Forum for Economic and Social Consultation (FES) was able to provide such a space by addressing questions related to land ownership and socio-economic structural adjustments.

» Confidence-building remains crucial throughout all stages of a peace process. Mechanisms which aim at encouraging political pluralism and inter-elite cooperation help to mitigate and overcome risks that derive from inter-party polarization or power monopoly.

Rationale and challenges of inclusive implementation

Potentials & Opportunities

Inclusive implementation and broadening participation in post-war settlements is neither a good per se, nor is it a purely altruistic endeavour. First and foremost, it represents a condition to anticipate and respond to imminent challenges, fostering (inter- and intra-party) political consensus and broadening the base of public support for peace processes.

≡ Broadening public support and increasing legitimacy
Ensuring the inclusion of civil society as agents of peace throughout critical stages of a peace process can foster public support, increase the level of trust and instigate a strong connect between post-war national elites and their local constituencies. A strong mandate of rights and responsibilities for civil society actors can thereby create a public buy-in to strengthen the overall resilience and acceptance of peace processes. Implementation mechanisms that allow local actors to become the bedrock of a peace process increase the resilience of agreements as civil society assumes a monitoring role.

≡ Better and context-specific negotiation outcomes
Inclusive implementation starts with the beginning of (pre-)negotiations when the rules of the game are set and topics of interest are being identified. The exclusion of critical civil society actors during the negotiations of the Mali Peace Accord (2015) resulted in a situation where crucial issues for local populations, such as the role of criminal economies, eventually compromised the overall peace process. A holistic vision of long-term peacebuilding facilitates the needed link between negotiation and implementation stages and ensures the proactive inclusion of crucial issues.

≡ Strengthening long-term perspectives for peace through a culture of dialogue
Post-conflict societies are often characterized by a deep level of mistrust. While a high degree of inclusivity in implementation mechanisms might not automatically lead to social cohesion, it provides important entry points to establishing a culture of dialogue to cope with the heterogeneity of needs and concerns on the ground. Measures, such as the inclusion of long-term inclusive clauses (prospect of electoral reforms) in peace agreements and civil ownership can increase the trust level between former conflict parties and alienated segments of society.

≡ Overcoming unforeseen challenges and preventing spoilers
Broadening the scope of actors that are engaged in implementation processes can decrease the willingness of external actors to act as spoilers. Beyond the broad inclusion of civil society, inter-elite consensus can help to transform critical actors (i.e. socio-economic elites) from potential spoilers into stakeholders of the peace process. As local actors are not homogenous, the more their needs are already integrated into peace process, the greater the likelihood to mobilise the needed measures and resources to overcome unforeseen challenges of implementation.

≡ Promoting long-term political transformation
Shaping the future of post-war political arenas is a complex endeavour that needs to take into account heterogeneous needs and concerns. Inclusivity throughout peace processes can foster on-going dialogue and thereby strengthen the viability of newly established political institutions and security arrangements. Inclusive implementation roadmaps that open the space for long-term political transformation can enable the transformation of RLMs into political parties and increase the ownership of their local constituencies to engage in non-violent and democratic competition.

Example: Guatemala

The peace process in Guatemala is often highlighted as an example inclusive participation by civil society throughout the entire peace process. The terms of implementation and democratisation had been debated over the course of six years by between the government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (*Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca*, URNG) – supported by the Civil Society Assembly, formed in 1994 with representatives from crucial sectors of everyday social life in Guatemala. After the end of negotiations, the Commission de Acompañamiento became one of the main instruments for inclusivity in the implementation phase of Guatemalan peace process. Comprising representatives from the government, UNRG, Congress and civil society it was in charge of keeping the implementation schedule and the coordination with the thematic commissions on track. Despite criticism with regard to a lack of vertical inclusivity (civil society elite-driven), the commission provided an important space for continuous and constructive dialogue throughout the implementation process and strengthened the resilience of the Guatemalan peace process.

Crucial questions for RLMs

While RLMs are often in support of an inclusive peace processes, they face particular challenges. In contrast to governments, most RLMs have limited access to financial, material and ideational resources (knowledge and networks) that are required to persist and compete in post-war political arenas. Finding a context-specific approach and self-awareness in terms of capabilities and opportunities can help to gradually overcome these challenges.

How to start with inclusive implementation

» Inclusive implementation processes represent a comprehensive set of intertwining actions and responses to needs and concerns. Opening the gateway in an environment of mistrust and perpetuated violence calls for a continuous and, ideally, open-ended process of confidence-building measures (CBMs).

» Step-by-step approach: The progressive increase of transparency in communication and exchange (also via "symbolic recognition") is crucial. First CBMs, such as the release of prisoners, de-listing of RLMs as well as civil society proxies, and de-militarisation of territories can be initial stepping stones.

» In Colombia, the 19th of April movement (M-19) concentrated its troops in one single assembly area of the country. While not giving up the bargaining chip in terms of correlation of forces, the initiative promoted de-militarisation through unilateral confidence-building.

» In numerous post-conflict countries, forums for continuous dialogue, such as joint monitoring bodies or peace commissions were preceded by perpetuated informal meetings. Opening informal channels for exchange and subsequently promoting their institutionalisation can diversify the peace process on different fora and tracks (inclusion of aligned civil society actors), and increase inter-party consensus.

How to enable and enhance conflict parties' ability to implement

» Coping with the lack of capacities to implement time- and resource-intensive peace agreements is challenging for RLMs and often requires the operational support from third parties (local and/or international).

» Identifying potential custodians for peace and creating opportunities for a buy-in of local (i.e. business-elites) and/or international third parties can bridge this capability gap.

» Establishing a network of co-sponsors with access to material and ideational resources (negotiation & communication expertise, process knowledge, establishing technical secretariats) is particularly important for RLMs to prepare as early as possible for a life after armed struggle and ensure a smooth transformation.

### How to strengthen compliance of the parties throughout crucial stages

» Parity and equality need to be the guiding principles of implementation bodies (e.g. joint monitoring committees) to guarantee ownership, trust and compliance.

» Other specific (material or ideational) incentives for compliance can help to create tangible perspectives in a peace process and influence the rational calculus of parties. Social pressure (information campaigns, town meetings and social media campaigns) accompanied by civil society are instruments for RLMs to encourage compliance.

» Generating compliance also means avoiding internal fragmentation and proactively dealing with the issue of spoilers by having an inclusive forum for internal exchange. The promotion of a democratic culture of (internal) dialogue can facilitate expectation management and at the same time raise awareness on the possible consequences of non-compliance (targeted messages).

How to broaden public support for the implementation

» Civil society support can be a crucial factor to promote an ownership-based safety-net and thereby steer the pace of the peace process.

» Including civil society requires a clear communication strategy and engaging in constant exchange with local constituencies to integrate their particular interests, needs and concerns. If vertical inclusivity is guaranteed, the increased legitimacy of RLMs may bolster their mandate in the implementation process.

» In the context of the Basque country, RLM agents have been following the strategy of unilateral concessions (self-demobilization, arms withdrawal and dissolution) for years, in order to publicly display their willingness to support the peace process. Although the deadlock has not yet been lifted, this way of operating has increased the pressure on governments to answers calls from civil society for putting forward a peace process.

» Public support strategies can take various forms - from mere awareness raising campaigns (workshops, dialogue platforms, space for consultations) to more comprehensive and all-encompassing projects, such as National Dialogues.

» A referendum or plebiscite can be an important tool to validate the peace efforts of parties and broaden public support. However, the failed peace plebiscite in Colombia (2016) has shown that this approach can backfire and requires a long and intensive exchange with civil society to generate a common understanding of what is at stake.

# The role of international 3rd parties

Process facilitator & mediator
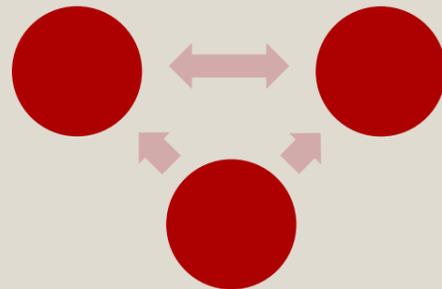
» The successful implementation of peace accords lies in the hands of domestic actors. This notwithstanding, international third parties can play different and yet crucial roles in support of peace processes and in meeting the conditions for effective and inclusive implementation.

» While relative bargaining power and the correlation of (military) forces often characterise the outlines of negotiations, the implementation of peace accords requires a space for collaboration, where armed competitors can transform into agents of change. Third parties can help to facilitate this transition from negotiations to the implementation stage and act as neutral, internationally recognized, mediators in times of crisis.

» Knowledgeable third parties are often the only actors to counter the handicap of distrust and bring parties from principled positions back to interest-based bargaining, during and beyond the stage of negotiations. In El Salvador, Spain's role in offering advice and facilitating a situation of joint understanding between the conflict parties was crucial to paving the way towards the implementation of the peace accord and the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace.

Guarantor state & monitor
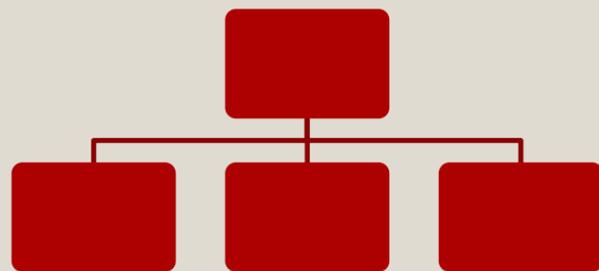
» Implementation guarantees in the military, political and territorial sectors are often key elements of sustainable war-to-peace transitions. These guarantees play an important role in enhancing the political will and ability of armed groups to transform into post-war peaceful actors.

» International thirds parties can play an effective role in bolstering this reassurance by assuming a function as **guarantor and/or referee** throughout the various steps of implementation roadmaps.

» Third parties like the UN can also play an important role in monitoring or containing the correlation of forces while the peace process passes through the contentious phases of implementation (especially Security Sector Reforms and stages of DDR).

» External actors, through UN or regional peacekeeping missions and oversight mechanisms, have played crucial roles in this domain, especially by providing security oversight for demobilising combatants, and monitoring the implementation of democratisation measures that enable a broadening of political participation.

Financial & technical assistance
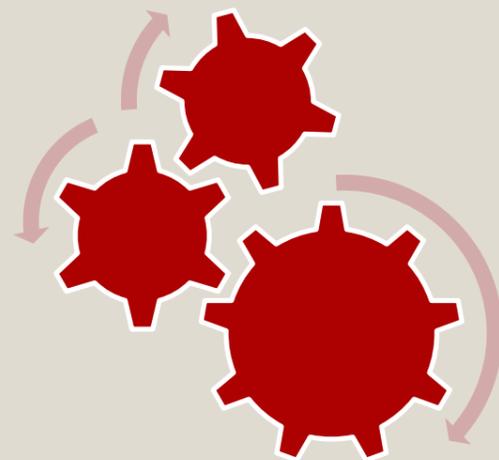
» Implementation is a costly endeavour and often exceeds the capacities of domestic players in post-conflict societies. Through financial aid and technical support international donors and NGOs can contribute to the implementation of peaceful transition in post-war political arenas.

» Support to post-war stakeholders can take different forms. Third parties often possess the expertise required to promote **institutional capacity-building**, such as support to electoral reforms, equipping and strengthening existing institutions, designing institutional consultation mechanisms and needed agencies (i.e. for reintegration or disarmament).

» Through **actor-targeted support** (trainings, consultations, capacity-building workshops), international third parties, including international NGOs, can strengthen the capacities of state and non-state actors to develop the skillset required for the implementation of peace agreements and on-going dialogue/negotiations.

» Support to **security transition** processes entails both institutional as well as actor-targeted capacity building in one of the most sensitive areas. By offering technical assistance and knowledge resources, third parties can help to put forward inclusive and effective SSR that take the requirements of the post-war political arena into account..

The role of international 3rd parties

Rationale of including 3rd parties

Over the last several years, international third parties have gained an increasingly important role in many peace processes. Many conditions for effective and inclusive implementation of peace agreements, such as parties' political will and capacity to implement, as well as the overall context in which a peace process unfolds intertwine with the presence (or absence) of the international community. For non-state actors, such as RLMs, the support of international third parties bears specific relevance:

» The engagement of international third parties can help RLMs to request international recognition for the development and implementation of a peace agreement, create a commitment to third party facilitation and thereby increase the possibilities to express genuine needs and concerns.

» International support as custodians of a peace process can help to contain the correlation of forces between state and non-state actors throughout the implementation stage of a peace process and avoid that parties try to outplay each other in terms of military resources. In El Salvador, the inclusion of regional powers (Venezuela, Mexico, and Colombia) into a group of friends helped to improve the overall resilience of the implementation roadmap.

» The comparative knowledge and material assets thirds parties can contribute are often required to allow for the peaceful inclusion of NSAGs into post-war decision-making. Third party support can be of particular importance for RLMs in order to generate statecraft and governance abilities (strengthening political department, organization of trainings) and thereby improve their capabilities to compete in political arenas.

In order to bring international third parties on board, RLMs are often confronted with the need to develop a problem-specific approach. Strategies to make use of international third parties can take different forms and include:

» Conducting a thorough **analysis to identify all relevant stakeholders**, key multipliers (respected elders, church, key influential of civil society, etc.) and mobilising civil society (via the media) to broaden the base of legitimacy can help to stimulate trust-building and pave the way for a gradual involvement of international third parties;

» The **use of good offices** and institutional assistance to reach out to third parties to cope with the requirements of a peace agreement and advocate for the need of capacity-building and workshops (negotiation support, technical assistance, conflict analysis etc.);

» Working towards an institutionalization of bodies/instruments for **strategic international networking** (i.e. international department or civil society contact points) in order to reach out to international stakeholders and have a reliable external communication structure;

» Support a proactive role of international third parties as observers, custodians and/or monitors of implementation by making use of their institutional knowledge and instruments while advocating for the **non-duplication of roles and responsibilities**;

» Include (international) third parties as advisors and consultants to facilitate trust-building between the conflict parties and international stakeholders in order to stimulate their gradual integration into the implementation roadmap.

Experiences & Trade-offs

Potentials & Opportunities of including international third parties:

» Getting access to technical & financial support, expertise and networks;

» Making use of institutional knowledge and drawing power of knowledgeable international actors;

» Sharing experiences and lessons-learned from other conflict scenarios;

» Levelling the playing ground and creating a solid base of expectations when third parties assume a responsibility as guardians or monitors of peace process;

» Ensuring a platform for coordination of international and local efforts throughout the stages of the peace process.

Challenges in dealing with international third parties:

» Third parties and international agencies are often reluctant to engage with key non-state stakeholders such as local/traditional/informal elites, as well as opposition parties or RLMs;

» Third party mediators often fail to follow-up after the signature of an agreement (lack of responsibility);

» They often pursue very genuine interests that may contradict those of the one or more parties in the peace process (e.g. strategic continuation of the conflict);

» Overreliance on and overestimation of third parties and their capabilities can deprive peace efforts from local ownership and hamper the process;

» The inability of third parties to properly handle the (social and cultural) terrain may compromise their good intentions.

10 Key Take Aways

1. Be proactive in analysing and anticipating challenges of implementation during the (pre-)negotiations of a settlement;

2. Implementation is the continuation of negotiations – Set-up structures (intra- and interparty) to allow for an inclusive and dialogue-based approach to implementation;

3. Promote a democratic cultural of dialogue to foster intra-party cohesion, avoid internal fragmentation and broaden your legitimacy;

4. Engage in thorough confidence-building, expectation management & do not overestimate your capabilities;

5. Broaden public participation throughout all stages of an implementation roadmap (including planning, monitoring, and evaluation);

6. Include organized civil societies as stakeholders of the implementation process to bolster its resilience – make them the watchdogs of the peace process;

7. Analyse and map key influentials on the ground and make use of information & social media campaigns to raise public awareness;

8. Develop strategies and capacities to reach out to international stakeholders (good offices, international networking, civil society proxies);

9. Put your weight behind a clear definition of roles & responsibilities of international third parties (mediator, referee and/or financier) and advocate for the need of joint monitoring;

10. Get early support of local and international structures to master the challenges of political transformation that will arise during implementation.

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