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Building a Pathway to Peace

From the outside, an outbreak of violence can seem spontaneous. But even when a community seems relatively peaceful, the seeds of violence can be growing. Where there is poverty, oppression, corruption, or scarcity of resources, the potential for violence is there as well.

Too often, that potential is not addressed until it is too late. At that point, attention rightly focuses on keeping people safe and minimizing casualties.

Eventually, the conflict de-escalates and violence subsides. Yet, all too often, the seeds of violence remain, dormant, just waiting to grow again. The very actions designed to end the violence can sow new seeds. And so the cycle continues.

Quakers and others opposed to war are often challenged at the moment when violence peaks, when people are already dying, to offer an alternative

to violent intervention. Pacifism is equated with passivism, doing nothing while lives are lost.

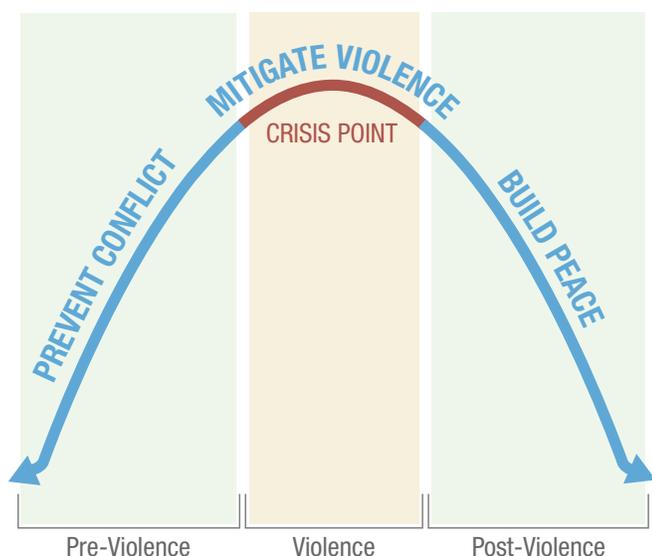
Trapped in this cycle of violence as we are, we urge action that we believe will minimize the loss of life. Every life is precious, and we mourn all those killed in violent conflict, whether civilian or soldier. Diplomatic negotiation, humanitarian aid, and accountability for those who have committed crimes are just a few of the ways we encourage our leaders to address conflicts.

But we also refuse to accept that this cycle is inevitable. Before, during, and after a conflict, we can act to build peace and uproot the seeds that lead to violence. FCNL is working to persuade our government to move in this direction.

Fundamentally, we need to convince the U.S. government to put peacebuilding and violence prevention — not military response — at the center of its foreign policy.

This transformation will take work. Yet in the past decade we have made progress on infusing a peacebuilding approach into some parts of the U.S. government. Following atrocities in Rwanda, Bosnia and Sudan, and the dramatic expansion of “counterterrorism” after the 9/11 attacks, there was a push from advocacy groups and some within the government to create new structures and funding to prevent conflict rather than simply respond to it.

FCNL continues to be at the forefront of these efforts. We co-founded and now coordinate an influential coalition dedicated to preventing violent conflict and protecting civilians. We’ve led efforts to support



Peacebuilding can take place in each phase of the conflict cycle.

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An Infrastructure for Peace

To build peace, the U.S. needs to lead with responses that prevent, reduce, transform and help people recover from violence in all forms.

Over the past 15 years, FCNL has worked to move U.S. foreign policy in this direction. We have made progress: the U.S. now has some infrastructure in place to prevent violence and build peace. The rhetoric of peacebuilding is starting to penetrate.

But this infrastructure is still young and fragile. Our work today is to fortify the structures of peacebuilding and, along with colleagues in and outside of the government, to institutionalize peacebuilding as a priority approach for our country.

Where We've Been

In the days after 9/11, as our country rushed towards war, FCNL emphatically stated that “war is not the answer” to violence. Instead, we took to the Hill to develop and advocate proactive ways for the U.S. to build peace and prevent violence from breaking out in the first place.

Preventing mass atrocities is a core national security interest and moral responsibility of the United States.

Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, U.S. State Department

At first, congressional staff were unreceptive — but, gradually, we started to hear them adopting the language of peacebuilding and prevention. These ideas have now taken root at the highest levels of government: in its 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, a major planning document, the State Department stated that “preventing mass atrocities is a core national security interest and moral responsibility of the United States.”

Where We Are

Our lobbying has helped create and fund critical pieces of peacebuilding infrastructure in the U.S.



FCNL's peacebuilding team works with many government agencies and non-governmental organizations to encourage U.S. support for peacebuilding practices around the world.

government. The State Department and USAID are at the forefront of this work, but peacebuilding needs to involve people throughout government, from intelligence officers to military leaders to development experts, to be successful.

Here are some of the ways that the U.S. is starting to focus on peacebuilding at every stage in a conflict.

Before a crisis emerges: Looking for warning signs.

The interagency Atrocities Prevention Board provides a forum for military, intelligence and diplomatic leaders to collaborate, share information and develop prevention policy responses. First convened in April 2012 and now meeting monthly, it is part of a comprehensive U.S. strategy to better prevent genocide and mass atrocities.

The coalition of human rights, religious, humanitarian and peace organizations that make up the Prevention and Protection Working Group has been a key advocate for the Atrocities Prevention Board. FCNL co-founded this coalition in 2008 and continues to coordinate its work.

In the midst of violence: Finding resources. Most money that Congress appropriates is designated for a specific project, which presents a challenge when a crisis erupts. The Complex Crises Fund is a flexible

fund that provides money to USAID, in coordination with the State Department, to respond to emergencies.

Planning for the future. The State Department plays a critical role in the planning and policy analysis that is needed to anticipate, prevent and respond to conflict and to promote long-term stability. FCNL's advocacy helped lead to the creation of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, which acts as the peacebuilding hub in the State Department.

Effective prevention requires early, active and sustained engagement.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Peacebuilding's Potential

Although this infrastructure is relatively new, it is already showing its potential to help the U.S. to identify and respond to threatening violence.

- » In 2013 the U.S. was able to respond rapidly to violence in the **Central African Republic**. (See page 8)
- » In advance of 2013 elections, the U.S. helped support locally-led peace networks and early warning systems in tense areas throughout **Kenya**. Similar activities are now underway in **Burundi**.

- » In **Sri Lanka**, U.S.-funded projects helped communities resume basic farming and agricultural production as people return to the country following the end of its civil war in 2009.
- » In **Guinea**, the U.S. is supporting work in an area recently affected by violence and the Ebola outbreak to help build conflict resolution skills and promote peacebuilding.

Challenges Ahead

These programs, while beginning to show their effectiveness, are still precarious. Congress does not always see their value, and their existence and funding is in doubt year to year.

Peacebuilding is long-term work. It will take time for these non-militarized strategies to be seen as viable, first-resort options in potential conflict situations. Unless Congress acts soon, however, these programs may not have that opportunity. Without permanent authorization, these programs may not outlast the current administration. The Complex Crises Fund and Atrocities Prevention Board are particularly vulnerable.

These programs are also hampered by the environment in which they exist: in parallel to a counterterrorism doctrine that often works against attempts to build long-term peace and stability.

Our advocacy in support of these programs is critical. U.S. foreign policy remains largely

militarized, yet the skeleton of a successful peacebuilding infrastructure are in place. The actions Congress takes in the next year can move U.S. foreign policy in the direction of our shared security, or it can reverse the gains of the past decade. As we work for authorization of and funding for these programs, we are keenly aware of the stakes of this debate. Changing the direction of U.S. foreign policy is not easy, nor will it happen quickly, but our experience working to advance peacebuilding over the past decade shows that it can happen. 

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What Can the U.S. Do?

Peacebuilding Recommendations for Policymakers

The U.S. is beginning to build the infrastructure to support peace and respond effectively when violence threatens. Over the past eight years, this work has moved forward as the Obama administration and some in Congress have elevated the importance of peacebuilding efforts and created ways to fund them.

We urge policymakers to solidify U.S. investment in peacebuilding and commit to funding it adequately.

1. Permanently authorize the Atrocities Prevention Board.

The Board is the key structure to coordinate and direct U.S. policies to prevent mass atrocities, but it can be easily dismantled by the next administration. Congressional authorization would protect the Board and allow it to continue its work.

Why does authorization matter? The Board has begun to change bureaucratic practices and increase the U.S. government's understanding of preventing genocide and mass atrocities, but it needs time and stability to continue this work effectively. The Board's expiration would erase the progress it has made. This has happened before: President Clinton created a similar body that did not outlast his presidency.

Lack of authorization also hurts the Board's current efforts. Change to government institutions happens slowly. If the Board has an

expiration date, it is more difficult to get buy-in for the institutional changes needed to prioritize prevention.

Take action: Ask your members of Congress to support permanent authorization for the Board, and join us in Washington, DC this November to lobby for peacebuilding and the Atrocities Prevention Board. Find out more: fcnl.org/apb

2. Authorize and fully fund the Complex Crises Fund.

This fund has quickly become one of the most useful tools in the U.S. foreign policy toolkit, helping to mitigate violence in Kenya, Central African Republic, Sri Lanka

and 16 more countries. But the fund has never been authorized by Congress.

Authorization would help clearly define the fund's mission and make sure it continues to be a part of U.S. response to violence. And lack of authorization makes it harder to convince Congress to support it. For five years now, the House has eliminated the fund, only to have the Senate restore it thanks to emergency advocacy by FCNL and our colleagues.

Take action: Please ask your members of Congress to authorize the Complex Crises Fund and to fully fund it at \$100 million. Find out more: fcnl.org/ccf 

Ask the Candidates: Peacebuilding

The 2016 campaign is already underway. This is an opportunity to engage with candidates seeking to represent you. When you ask a question — in person, via email or social media, or in a letter to the editor — you have the chance to learn about candidates' positions and let them know what matters to you.

Investing early to prevent war is far more cost-effective than military intervention after a crisis erupts. Yet Congress has cut funding even for small programs, like the Complex Crises Fund, that can help prevent violent conflict. Will you support full funding for State Department and USAID programs that help prevent war?

For more information, visit: fcnl.org/election

BUILDING A PATHWAY TO PEACE

FCNL's Annual Meeting & Quaker Public Policy Institute
November 12-15, 2015

Washington Court Hotel
525 New Jersey Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001

To register, go to:
fcnl.org/annualmeeting

Pathways to Peace from page 1

development of new programs and capacities in USAID and the State Department to help respond to and prevent violence. We've advocated for increased coordination throughout the government to make violence prevention a priority. In 2012, President Obama created an Atrocities Prevention Board to undertake this coordination.

We are seeing the concrete results of this approach in conflicts and potential conflicts around the world. In this newsletter, we share stories of how U.S. engagement in the Central African Republic, Kenya and elsewhere has helped prevent violence and build peace.

Despite these gains, we still have a long way to go. These efforts need more money, and more commitment from Congress, to be effective in more situations. So much work has to happen each year just to ensure the continued existence of peacebuilding programs, it leaves little time and energy to expand these efforts further.

Our voices are needed now to ensure the continued existence and growth of U.S. peacebuilding efforts. This November, at the third annual Quaker Public Policy Institute and Lobby Day, hundreds of people from across the country will come to Washington, DC to lobby for civilian-led peacebuilding. We hope you'll join us.

Whether you come in person this fall or advocate from home, your voice is critically important. You can help make the case that short-term, short-sighted responses to violence are not the solution, and that it is possible to build a pathway to peace. 



FCNL is our investment in our grandchildren's future.

—Deborah Fink & A.M. Fink
Ames, IA

Find out how you can leave a legacy for peace through your will or a life income gift to FCNL. To learn more visit fcnl.org/plannedgiving or contact Mary Comfort Ferrell at marycomfort@fcnl.org or 202-903-2539.

Central African Republic from page 8



Central African Republic highlighted in red.

In Bossangoa, residents fled their homes. The Muslim community would eventually be evacuated by the United Nations to neighboring Chad. Standing near the remains of burnt-out homes this spring was a powerful reminder of the community's recent scars.

Ambassador to the U.N., Samantha Power, traveled to CAR, and the U.S. was a strong advocate for an international response.

But, in this case, the U.S. did more than help stop the violence. Complex Crises Fund money helped organizations working in CAR — including Mercy Corps, Catholic Relief Services and Search for Common Ground — support the creation of community-based and -led social cohesion committees. These groups have been instrumental in helping villages to address immediate and ongoing conflicts without resorting to violence. This is peacebuilding in action.

On my travels this spring, I saw and learned about the impact of some of these CCF-funded programs. An important effect of social cohesion committees and other programs to bring people together has been to make it more feasible for the country to start to rebuild.

In May 2014, conditions were so bad that a food security program distributing seeds to local farming communities had to halt their work. Just a year later, the situation had calmed. The May 2015 seed deliveries were taking place without violent incidents. This peacebuilding work made it possible for these farming villages to plant this year's crop. Social cohesion committees continue to work to address concerns among village residents and with the Fulani, nomadic people who travel through the area.

The Central African Republic had not been a priority for U.S. foreign policy. As violence increased in late 2013, however, faith leaders and U.S. groups such as FCNL became concerned. The conflict in CAR has put to the test U.S. policies and structures to help prevent violent conflict, which FCNL has been instrumental in helping to institutionalize and fund.

Evaluating the U.S. Response

Along with others inside and outside the U.S. government, FCNL successfully pushed the White House to respond to the crisis quickly and to mobilize the Atrocities Prevention Board.

Just a few days after reports of violence in December 2013, the U.S. mobilized resources and focused on how to prevent further atrocities. The U.S.



Florence Ntakirutimana, currently working with Catholic Relief Services on trauma healing, talks about peacebuilding with Allyson.



A Mercy Corps pro-peace sign in Bangui.

In the home village of President Bozizé, members of the social cohesion committee told me of their concerns about the weapons carried by Fulani. They also expressed willingness and hope for improved relations, including potentially re-opening the village to trade opportunities. Despite remaining fear and trauma, this peacebuilding work is beginning to have a positive impact.

Looking Forward

In Bossangoa, peacebuilders told me of their vision that the Muslim populations will feel safe enough to return and rebuild their community. It's a possibility, but one that still requires a significant investment. Positive interactions between the primarily-Muslim Fulani who travel through the region and the remaining Christian villagers gives hope that this can happen.

Providing aid is never simple, but it's even more challenging in a conflict zone. Perceptions of

unfairness or inequality can lead to renewed violence. Going forward, peacebuilders emphasized to me that the international community and non-governmental organizations should work to tie social cohesion activities to aid and services — like food security programs —whenever possible.

There's an immense amount to do in support of peace. In CAR, local leaders, local communities, local organizations and international organizations are doing fantastic work. The Complex Crises Fund has enabled a great number of activities to take place. But this money is running out.

With violence on the decline and the height of the crisis past in CAR, it is a challenge to sustain U.S. and international attention on the country's rebuilding efforts. Yet it's in these post-conflict situations that this attention is needed, to help the peacebuilders in CAR work to break the cycle of violence in their country. To fund this long-term work, USAID has pulled

together resources and committed \$7 million toward a CAR Peacebuilding Partnership fund, but the money can only be used if non-governmental organizations match this funding. The U.S. government cannot maintain robust support over the long term, leading it to seek outside sources of investment. While non-governmental investment is important, we would like the U.S. to provide agencies such as USAID with sufficient resources to do this work.

I returned from my trip with many stories to share with administration officials and members of Congress. U.S. investments and responses are making a difference, but there is continued need for U.S. support of and engagement with the people of CAR. The communities I visited still have immense needs and challenges to building peace. In my work on Capitol Hill, I look forward to helping the U.S. continue to be an active, long-term partner in this work.



Nestor Namsene of the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace talks to the social cohesion committee in Benzambe, outside Bossangoa.

Photo Credit: Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace Bossangoa



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Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic

By Allyson Neville-Morgan



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This May, I walked through a ruined marketplace in Bossangoa, a town nearly 200 miles from the Central African Republic's capital of Bangui. Two years ago, this was a thriving gathering place for the town and surrounding community. Today, grass and shrubs are overgrowing the charred remains of walls and rubble.

What happened to this market, and to the people who used to live around it, is one small part of CAR's recent history of violence. In the two weeks I spent in the country this spring, I talked with dozens of Central Africans and others who are working to rebuild and break this country's cycles of violence. Many of the people I met have directly or indirectly received U.S. assistance, and I wanted to see first-hand how the U.S. can support peacebuilding in CAR before, during and after a crisis.

Roots of Violence

As its name implies, the Central African Republic sits at the heart of Africa. It is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped countries in the world, bordering some of the most conflict-affected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the country has suffered through a series of coups d'état and dictatorships. Democratic rule was established in the 1990s but remains regularly under threat by those who seek power and control over the country's rich resources.

In March 2013, the Séléka opposition group ousted then-President François Bozizé, leading to widespread clashes between the Séléka and militia groups known as the anti-Balaka. Civilians, both Muslim and Christian, were targeted by these armed groups despite pleas from Central African Republic religious leaders to end the violence. Throughout 2013, attacks continued, and the situation remained volatile.

(continued on page 6)