

Panel Executive Brief: Conflict Prevention: Getting Ahead of the Curve

The Pathways for Peace Report is a United Nations-World Bank joint report focusing on cost effective prevention efforts. There is substantial overlap between the joint report and the SAR; hopefully that will make the process of shifting into a preventive mindset easier. Preventing conflicts before they begin is less costly than intervening in a conflict after it has already escalated into violence. Furthermore, establishment of conflict prevention initiatives is a fundamental step in the stabilization process.

Speakers

Corrine Graff - *Senior Policy Scholar, USIP*

Tine Knott - *Vice President, Center for Secure and Stable States, DAI*

Chuck Call - *Non-Resident Fellow, Brookings*

Tess McEnery - *Director for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, National Security Council, White House*

Kate Somvongsiri - *Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator (USAID/DCHA)*

Moderator: Paul Stares - *Director, Center for Preventive Action, Council on Foreign Relations*

Key Issues/Problems discussed:

- Donors can't keep spending money on humanitarian crises.
- Peacebuilders need to focus on prevention – conflict response is more expensive than conflict prevention.
- Widespread international tendency to avoid risk; this is a difficult obstacle to overcome, because intervening in any prevention situation is inherently risky.
- Major challenge is translating early warning into action on the ground; main issues are not analysis and early warning, but rather, appropriate action and prioritization.
- Inter-agency coordination in issues of prevention is not a strength of the USG.
- Preventive measures are effective, but there is not enough widespread buy-in.

Key Recommendations:

- Inclusive measures are vital for lasting conflict prevention; this goes for host nation governments and youth engagement. Peacebuilders need clear roles.
- Policy choices should be presented as acting preventatively or not, and the respective costs associated with each of those policies.
- Conflict prevention needs to address grievances through tailored solutions and targeted interventions.
- Investments in prevention programming help ensure future success in stabilization initiatives.

Significance of SAR:

The SAR understands that stabilization is a political endeavour for both the donor nations and the host nation, and that investments in prevention planning are essential to ensure future success in stabilization programs. The SAR further recognizes the importance of a unified USG approach toward stabilization and conflict prevention initiatives; without such cohesion, effective prevention initiatives will be difficult to achieve.