



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

PREVENTION

PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

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MISSION

The USIP's Center for Conflict Management (CCM) designs and manages the Institute's efforts to *prevent* the initial outbreak of violent conflict, *resolve* ongoing conflicts, and *stabilize* areas emerging from conflict. The Center also conducts research, identifies best practices, and develops new tools for conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

CALENDAR

October 31: Third Annual USIP Conference on Preventing Violent Conflict

November 6: U.S. Presidential Elections

Fall 2012: U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue meetings

PUBLICATIONS

- "The Politics of Security Sector Reform in Egypt" *USIP Special Report* by Dan Brumberg and Hesham Sallam, October 2012.
- "Libya Will Not be Another Iraq" *USIP Olive Branch Post*, 17 September 2012.
- "Network of Iraqi Facilitators (NIF) and Alliance of Iraqi Minorities" *USIP Olive Branch Post*, 10 September 2012.
- "The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance" *USIP Special Report* by Frances Brown, September 2012.
- "Lessons from Afghanistan's History for the Current Transition and Beyond" *USIP Special Report* by William Byrd, September 2012.

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Dear Colleagues,

On October 18 the United Nations General Assembly elected five new non-permanent members of the Security Council: Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, Rwanda, and South Korea. As is customary for the 10 elected non-permanent members (the E10), each nation will serve a two-year term beginning in January 2013. The countries they will replace include Germany, India, and South Africa—three aspirants to permanent seats in the Council. Colombia and Portugal are also leaving the Council at the end of 2012. Since only 5 of the UN's 193 member states are permanent members of the Security Council—the U.S., China, France, Russia, and the UK (the P5)—the rest of the membership eagerly seeks entry into this exclusive club albeit on a temporary basis. They do so for a variety of reasons including the desire for meaningful participation in world affairs given the Council's primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security under the UN Charter, national prestige, and to advance their national interests.

An important question is what impact, if any, the new non-permanent members will have on conflict prevention by the Security Council? At the United Nations, Australia, Luxembourg, and Rwanda have stressed the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding which have also been priorities of the Council in recent years. They can make a positive contribution by finding innovative ways to promote conflict prevention while on the Council. All new non-permanent members have also been strong supporters of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). These countries can also help improve relations among the P5 strained by the controversy surrounding R2P in the wake of the Libya intervention, and the ongoing crisis in Syria.

Senior Vice President
Center for Conflict Management
U.S. Institute of Peace



SPOTLIGHT

Network of Iraqi Facilitators (NIF) in Ninewa, Iraq

In July, 2012, 19-year-old Mohamed Hussein became the latest victim of religious violence during one of his casual walks through the city of Bartella, on the Ninewa Plains of northern Iraq. Receiving a concussion and multiple stab wounds to his upper body, Mohamed's attackers found fault in his Shabak Muslim faith and identity. This offense, and others like it, has increasingly destabilized the historically Christian city of 30,000.

Following the invasion of coalition forces in 2003, more and more Shabak Muslims broke free from the command urban planning schemes of Saddam Hussein to migrate from the countryside to the urban, Christian enclave of Bartella. In search of better job opportunities and public services, Shabak migration created unexpected demographic tensions in the city, threatening the way of life of both religious communities. Harassment at the Bartella checkpoints increased, violent assaults by each group grew, churches and mosques were defaced by graffiti, sometimes even bombed, and inflammatory speech in the media by leaders on both sides fueled tensions even further.

As the situation became ever more polarized, a team of three conflict resolution professionals from the NIF (founded by USIP in 2003) took the initiative to bring sectarian leaders to the table to negotiate a peaceful end to the cycle of violence plaguing their community. Building on their strong relationships in Bartella, they interviewed dozens of community and religious leaders to understand the issues in play. Then, using the facilitation and mediation skills gained from their USIP trainings and projects, these facilitators brought Shabak and Christian leaders to the table for a series of dialogues to discuss and understand each others' values and interests. Though often tense and heated, the dialogues opened channels for frank but respectful discussions and, more importantly, set the stage for collaboration on the development of concrete solutions to problems at the heart of the conflict. Over the course of three dialogues facilitated by the NIF team, Shabak and Christian leaders agreed on August 25 to find solutions to the main sources of conflict: religious intolerance, humiliating security practices, inequitable property ownership and poor public services. This was a breakthrough, immediately easing tensions between key leaders of the two deeply divided communities and raising guarded hopes for an end to the conflict through dialogue.

However, the long, complicated history of this conflict is still fresh and urgent in the minds and hearts of Christians and Shabaks. They remain skeptical of efforts to bring peace to the Ninewa plains, having seen many similar efforts come and go. Still, the NIF team continues its work: maintaining the problem-solving focus of the dialogue participants, ensuring they follow through with actionable work plans that yield concrete results, helping them turn the corner from conflict to collaboration.



شبكة الميسرين العراقيين
Network of Iraqi Facilitators

NIF Logo.

OVER THE HORIZON— HIGHLIGHTS

U.S.–Pakistan Relations

It has been a while since one was able to report a crisis-free period in the Pakistan-U.S. relationship. The period since the eight-month long lull in relations broke in late-July has been exactly that. There are grounds for cautious optimism as the United States and Pakistan have continued to talk and high level visits, including most recently of Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar to Washington, have taken place. Both sides agreed to revive the bilateral strategic dialogue and conversations took place to revitalize the Pakistan-Afghanistan-U.S. trilateral core mechanism on Afghan reconciliation. However, the fundamental differences and points of tension in the partnership remain, and make any progress tenuous. Pakistan is yet to launch a concerted effort against the Haqqani network in its tribal regions, drones continue to be an obvious bone of contention, anti-Americanism in Pakistan is on the rise, the mood in the U.S. is also extremely negative, and the U.S. Senate recently introduced a bill—ultimately defeated—on cutting off aid to Pakistan. Looking ahead, national elections in both countries are likely to keep the U.S.-Pakistan relationship off the media radar. On the one hand, this may give an opportunity to both governments to make quiet progress; on the other, it ensures that no bold moves to break through some of the deeper disconnects are in the offing. The best case scenario is that we avoid crises, continue the strategic dialogue and discussions on Afghanistan and terrorism, and hope to be ready to make major decisions once the election cycles are over.

Meanwhile, USIP's Pakistan program remains focused on supporting policy-relevant research and convening public events. In collaboration with the School of Public Policy at George Mason University, the Pakistan program hosted a day-long conference on Pakistani youth, their role in the future of Pakistan, and implications for U.S. policy. The program continues to view youth as central to peacebuilding efforts in Pakistan, a nation of 180 million where the under-29 population is close to 110 million.

Israel–Palestine at UNGA

The September 2012 UN General Assembly speeches of Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, underscored the stalemate in the peace process and the challenges to reviving negotiations. Abbas focused squarely on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He talked of the frustration of the Palestinian people at the deterioration of their situation under ongoing occupation; condemned what he characterized as an Israeli lack of good faith in pursuing peace, and expressed his intention to seek recognition by the UN in the coming year of Palestine as an observer state in the General Assembly. Netanyahu, in turn, criticized Abbas for using the speech to verbally attack Israel and to call for unilateral action, and reiterated his position that peace can only be achieved by a return to the negotiating table. However, he focused the majority of his speech on the threat posed to Israel by Iran: Israel's priority foreign policy concern. It had been expected that robust efforts to revive the peace process would remain on hold at least until after the American Presidential elections. This timeline may now be further extended until after newly-called early Israeli elections to be held at the end of January.

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UN General Assembly.
Source: Wikimedia Commons



“Tunisia may be moving towards a period of domestic political crisis far worse than anything it has experienced in the last few months.”

Constitution Building in Tunisia

As the Constituent Assembly struggles to pass a new constitution, Tunisia may be moving towards a period of domestic political crisis far worse than anything it has experienced in the last few months. Those months were marked by increasing secular-Islamist confrontation, by polarization within the government, and by the shocking events of September 14, when a crowd breached the walls of the U.S. embassy, while another crowd burned down a U.S. private school not far from the scene. While the leaders of Tunisia's largest party, Al-Nahda, have promised to bring to justice those responsible for these acts, they are hesitant to confront radical Salafists, whose followers were associated with the embassy events. At the same time, Nahda feels threatened by the creation of *Nida Tunis* (The Call of Tunis), a party largely led by political leaders of the ancien regime. Caught between two poles of an increasingly bitter cultural-political divide, Nahda leaders have not had the leverage to advance solutions to the hot button issues that paralyzed the Constituent Assembly, not least of which is the question of mosque-state relations and the role of women. And so Tunisia, which was meant to be the “easy case” for the Arab world, now faces an unknown political future.

Conflict Prevention through Regional Integration

By awarding the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union (EU), Norway's Nobel Committee has recognized the virtues of regional integration as a tool for conflict prevention. Regional integration can incrementally reduce the risk of violent conflict within a geographic area, and in the region's ‘near abroad’. The European integration project transformed a continent home to centuries of bloody conflict and mass killing into a zone of relative peace and prosperity. Through recurring dialogue between its member states, increased interdependence and the creation of dispute resolution mechanisms, regional organizations like the EU enhance mutual understanding, bolster a culture of consensus, and promote the use of non-military foreign policy tools. Through its enlargement policy, the EU also facilitated economic, political, and legal reform in neighboring countries aspiring membership or enhanced access to EU markets.

The Union's inability to resolve the economic challenges in the Eurozone, lead stability efforts in its southern neighborhood or formulate sustainable solutions in the Western Balkans may raise concerns about its political weight. But the Nobel award is a testament to the unprecedented impact regional integration has had in establishing peace and security on the European continent.



Map of Côte d'Ivoire.
Source: CIA Fact Book

Reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire

On October 2, the first trial of soldiers loyal to former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo opened in Abidjan. It marks the beginning of a series of trials in which about 40 Gbagbo loyalists will appear in court. The trials against the pro-Gbagbo forces form an important part of the reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire. However, they also provoked criticism inside the country and from international human rights organizations. Despite promises made by President Alassane Ouattara to prosecute atrocities committed by his own forces during the post-election crisis, the Ivorian judiciary has so far only charged members of the pro-Gbagbo forces for their crimes. This is problematic since impartial justice is an important precondition to bring Gbagbo's former party, the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), on board of the ongoing political dialogue. President Ouattara needs to ensure his own forces are brought to Ivorian courts and tried for crimes they were responsible for. The continuation of partial justice risks

endangering the fragile reconciliation process that has recently seen further setbacks in the form of armed attacks on installations of the Ivorian army and police carried out by Gbagbo loyalists operating from neighboring Ghana and Liberia.

WORKING GROUPS

- On October 5th, the **Lebanon Working Group (LWG)** hosted an off-the-record briefing and discussion focused on the broadening humanitarian crisis in Lebanon resulting from the influx of refugees fleeing from the conflict in neighboring Syria.
- On October 17, the Afghanistan program convened its regular **Elections Working Group (EWG)**. The discussion topics included the voter registration system, electoral reform, and the 24-month mark leading up to the elections.
- On October 31st, the **Yemen Working Group** hosted an off-the-record briefing and discussion with Jamal Benomar, the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, to report on the state of Yemen's transition.



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