



Safeguarding Peace, Shifting Priorities Berlin Statement

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The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), being a global network of civil society organisations supporting peacebuilding efforts in fragile & conflict affected settings, convened for its Annual Conference in Berlin, Germany on 17-18 May 2022.

Witnessing tectonic geopolitical developments that pose serious threats to multilateralism and international law, not only in Ukraine, but worldwide. The illegal invasion of Ukraine is causing widespread destruction, civilian deaths, and displacement. Unfortunately it has also distracted the international community's attention to other critical issues and human suffering, while its impact is worsening food scarcity and protection of human security in other settings. These include Afghanistan's takeover by the Taliban, recent military coups d'état in West Africa, as well as conflicts and resulting humanitarian crises in countries like Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Yemen.

Observing that the war in Ukraine demonstrates that conflict and outbreak of violence occur in all parts of the world, but that there is an apparent discrepancy in the way issues of peace and violence are perceived and receive attention from the global community. War in Europe is no different from war elsewhere in the world.

Recognising the persistent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic including its impact on peace and security, the compounding impact of climate change, conflict and the ongoing risks of dis- and misinformation and cybersecurity, we are also witnessing the increasing global trend of attacks on civil society, including delegitimisation, human rights abuses, and imprisonment that is greatly reducing their ability to operate.

Recalling commitments of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in the IDPS Peace Vision 2019-2021, we affirm the 2030 Agenda's commitment to peaceful, just, and inclusive societies (encompassed in SDG16), and we reaffirm our commitment to the Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles.

Emphasising the importance of accelerated action in support of the 2030 Agenda and recognising the value of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) in this context, we reconfirm the importance of tripartite collaboration between G7+ governments, INCAF-donors, and civil society (CSPPS) in promoting and sustaining peace.

With these considerations in mind, the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding emphasises the importance of all relevant stakeholders to commit to the following critical recommendations:

1 - Responding to Violent Conflict and Investing in Peace

Current geopolitical developments pose serious threats to multilateralism, international law, and global security, including nuclear threats, economic sanctions, cybersecurity, and growing food insecurity. We are witnessing an increased investment in military infrastructures and the production and proliferation of weapons of war. We stress the need to apply a consistent response to conflict and violence, no matter in which part of the world it unfolds. We therefore call upon governments and international organisations to not divert vital development assistance and resources needed to preserve and improve the quality of people's lives. Furthermore, we call for a greater commitment to local funding and resourcing conflict prevention and dialogue that are vital for building sustainable peace.

2 - Supporting Local Civil Society Initiatives on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Amid growing geopolitical tensions and shifting priorities, we call upon governments and the international community to continuously and significantly invest in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Building peace requires long-term driven investments whereby particular attention must be given to supporting local peacebuilders (in particular women, and young people, minorities and people living with disabilities) and enabling locally-led and inclusive approaches. We are deeply concerned about early signs of food and energy insecurity as a fall-out from the Ukraine crisis that is already impacting fragile states and will contribute to an upsurge in conflict and subsequent displacement globally.

3 - Applying a conflict-sensitive and integrated response to COVID-19

The global pandemic is more than a health crisis: it has exacerbated existing levels of conflict and fragility worldwide, foremostly in those countries already impacted by insecurity and instability. Our membership has witnessed that the pandemic has heightened pre-existing conflict drivers, widened levels of inequality and inequity (e.g. in access to vaccinations), and significantly contributed to increased conflict, insecurity, and poverty. We repeat our call for a global, robust, conflict-sensitive, integrated and more equal COVID-19 response that addresses the multiplied conflict drivers and builds levels of social cohesion critical to successfully implementing health programs and preventing as well as reducing conflict.

4 - Addressing the Climate Change-Conflict Nexus

Climate change, violent conflict, and fragility are compounding crises, and these combined factors are increasingly contributing to global fragility and conflict. The immediate effects of climate change in conflict-affected and fragile contexts further stress and undermine countries' abilities to address manifestations of fragility and violence. Climate change in conflict-affected and fragile contexts undermines countries' ability to adapt to, mitigate, and address climate risks and climatic hazards. A more robust, integrated, and intersectional response is essential to address the compounding crises of climate change, conflict, and fragility.

5 - Safeguarding and Enlarging Civic Space

Amidst a global pandemic, widespread political upheaval, and increasing instances of violence and conflict, we are witnessing the diminishing of civic space and a lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We call for urgent action to stem the tide of shrinking civic space in all societies but especially in conflict-affected and fragile states and call upon the international community to actively promote, protect, and where possible ensure a robust enabling environment for human rights defenders and fundamental freedoms for all.

6 - Strengthening Democracy

We are witnessing democratic backsliding and expanded authoritarianism globally. The decline in global freedom predates the pandemic, with 2021 being the 16th consecutive year showing a decline in

democracy. However, the pandemic has aggravated democratic backsliding and allowed autocrats to further consolidate power. We call upon governments to lift restrictions on fundamental freedoms of association, peaceful assembly, and expression and to support increased democratic governance programming, including combatting rampant dis- and misinformation.

7 - Fostering Sustainable Development

The SDGs are in peril. Progress toward realising the ambitions laid out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been slow, uneven, and is backsliding in many contexts. Focus must be given to SDG16+ as it is a pivotal element to enable and catalyse progress on the full Agenda. We call upon all stakeholders to accelerate action for safeguarding commitments to more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. As a Platform, we endorse the **2022 Rome Civil Society Declaration** [\[link\]](#) and call on other relevant stakeholders to join our endorsement.

8 - Embracing Our Common Agenda

We welcome the UN Secretary General's new Agenda for Peace (launched in context of Our Common Agenda) and support this call to invest in social cohesion, restore and renew social contracts, and support continuous and meaningful inclusion of civil society. We welcome the direly needed focus on the promotion of peace and the prevention of conflicts. Moreover, we firmly reiterate the stated need to put women and girls at the front and centre of security policy worldwide.

The CSPPS membership gathered in Berlin:

1. Stresses the critical importance of inclusive political dialogue processes for the localisation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and efforts to prevent conflict globally and to build sustainable peace;
2. Recognises the important role of local civil society as frontline peacebuilders and calls upon the international community to value and support their critical and essential work;
3. Calls upon its bilateral and multilateral partners to safeguard and work to enable and expand civic space;
4. Urges the g7+ and donors to maintain and deepen the integration of youth and gender lenses in their approach to peacebuilding, statebuilding, and crisis prevention, in line with UNSCR 2250, UNSCR 1325, and related resolutions;
5. Urges donors to recognise that short-term and securitised approaches come at the expense of the longer-term action and funding mechanisms necessary to support deep, systemic and sustainable change in line with the 2030 Agenda;
6. Re-emphasises our commitment to conflict prevention as a key area of our work, including the need to institutionalise early warning and early prevention and response mechanisms.

CSPPS is determined to act collectively in pursuit of its mission and core strategies, which are:

1. Amplifying the voice and agency of civil society to effectively engage in, and influence, peacebuilding and statebuilding as a critical contribution to conflict/crisis prevention and building sustainable peace and development for all;
2. Applying peacebuilding values to shape and infuse the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, the Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian processes – urging for accelerated support for the role of local peacebuilders;
3. Strengthening, broadening and deepening civil society engagement in policy discussions on peacebuilding and crisis prevention at all levels.

In particular, we resolve to:

1. Work in full cooperation with our International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding partners (g7+ governments and INCAF donors) in pursuit of furthering our multi-stakeholder partnership and to use political dialogue to address the complex and compounding issues of fragility, conflict and violence;
2. Continue to fulfil our responsibility as civil society to hold stakeholders accountable in realising commitments made in context of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
3. Aspire a direct leadership role for CSPPS in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding as testament to a true tripartite partnership;
4. Demonstrate - through effective communications at global and national levels - civil society's contribution to conflict prevention and sustaining peace;
5. Seek adequate support to pursue the deepening and broadening of civil society engagement in pursuing more peaceful, just and inclusive societies across the globe.

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