

# ECOSOC - Economic and Social Council

Restoring economic and social  
stability in post-conflict regions



<b>Forum:</b>	Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
<b>Issue:</b>	Restoring economic and social stability in post-conflict regions
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## Introduction

In many post-conflict regions, the transition to peace remains fragile and reversible which is a major issue tackled by the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations (UN). Countries facing restoration of economic and social stability are often confronted with large rates of unemployment and poverty etc, destroyed physical human and social capital, altered economic incentives and criminal networks and warlords. Subsequently, states must ensure to reconstruct security, including economic security and focus on employment.

According to the United Nations, many post-conflict countries threaten their social and economic resilience, and fail to develop their employment opportunities, effective governance and security for their citizens. It is therefore of utmost importance for organisations such as the UN to aid these countries in aim of restoring long lasting peace as well as economic and social stability within post-conflict regions.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Post-Conflict regions

A region, often a country or multiple countries forming a large region such as in the Yugoslav wars, in which open warfare conflict has terminated. Such situations still remain tense for years up to decades after the war and threaten to relapse into another conflict.



## **Social stability**

To regain social stability a post-conflict country will first reconstruct their social status and then aim to sustain this stable social situation. For a nation this means attaining ability to function in various social situations within the satisfaction of the country's interest. The nation must provide services such as stable governance, law enforcement etc, to satisfy its citizens and ensure the prevention of relapse into conflict urged by the population.

## **Economic stability**

For a country to function well independent of the aid provided by other countries, a post-conflict nation must ensure economic stability within the country. This includes a functioning import export system, with which the country trades with other nations in order to provide its population with necessary resources and other products. The country must also have an appropriate funding system, which includes but is not limited to a stable currency and a government sustained help towards organisations and individuals.

## **Social rehabilitation**

When a country is under reconstruction, whether it is a post-war region or not, a key element to a successful rehabilitation of the nation is its social connections. A post-conflict state will aim to achieve social stability through means including regaining the trust and the motivation of its citizens. A nation must also rebuild social structure such as a functioning and satisfactory governing system.

## **Economic rehabilitation**

Economic rehabilitation is referred to as the act of restoring a country's economy. This is extremely important in the aim of restoring stability in a post-conflict region. Economic stability can be achieved through measures undertaken by the state which could include the recreation of farming and energy businesses, to supply the nation's population with the necessary food and water as well as energy, without being dependant of other countries.



## General Overview

### The UNDP

Restoring social and economic stability in post-conflict regions is one of the major tasks of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is of utmost importance for the UN to aid countries recovering from conflict, for which they work together with the state itself and other development partners. The UNDP also provides report where ideas are explained how post-conflict countries can build on their existing capacities to assume primary responsibility for their own recovery. The main objectives of such reports are "preventing relapse into conflict and laying the foundations for lasting peace and sustainable development".

The UNDP has created a progress list for post-conflict countries called 'peace milestones', which can guides such countries through a successful recovery from conflict into a prosperous economy:

- cessation of hostilities and violence;
- signing of peace agreements;
- inception of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration;
- return of refugees and IDPs;
- establishment of the foundations for a functioning state;
- initiation of reconciliation and societal integration; and
- start of economic recovery.

Once the economic recovery has started, countries are often aided by others, however nations must generate their own resources and become independent to satisfy the needs of the long-suffering population.

### Returning to pre-conflict economic state

After conflict, some countries try to return to their pre-war economic state if they had social stability and a successful economy and governance system, which means the highest level of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita attained during the preceding five years of the conflict. This was the case with France and the United States after the Second World War for example, which led them to a booming economic expansion in these countries along with many others. If however the growth-rate was very low or even negative, with the help of other countries the state will try a new approach to raise their GDP per capita growth-rate: as some established organisations say; "post-conflict recovery is about creating a new political economy



dispensation. It is about building back differently and better." A country will also aim to achieve a socio-economic well-being, through offering necessities and privileges to its citizens, which could include the following; social security, public health, education, employment and law enforcement. If countries focus on growth alone, it may undermine the management for economic consequences aroused through the conflict. The World Bank for instance, defines post-conflict restoration as "the rebuilding of the socio-economic framework of society" and "the reconstruction enabling conditions for a functioning peacetime society, explicitly including governance and the rule of law as essential components".

### Recent post-conflict recoveries and the aid of other countries

Since the 1990s, the UN has described about 35 countries to be in a post-conflict recovery stage, many of which are low-income countries, which poses a more difficult task at restoring the social and economic welfare and stability. Such countries struggle to mobilise human and financial resources which are essential for humanitarian relief and afterwards the economic restoration. Generally speaking, the post-conflict recovery has improved over the past century, seeing as there are fewer conflicts and better organised and executed post-conflict reconstructions. Currently there are many post-conflict regions which are being restored, of which some include Iraq after the Iraq war, the region affected by the Houthi insurgency in and around Yemen, Chad after the Chadian Civil War and Somalia following the Somali Civil War.

Many More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) help post-conflict regions through measures such as monetarism aid and organisational aid in order to reestablish a peaceful and safe society. A key to successful rehabilitation is to give the population power to drive the restoration, through for example allowing them to have significant decision making power where funding should be allocated towards. Reconstruction must also be targeted in all areas of the post-conflict region, to assure all citizens feel in consideration of the state and do not cause a revolution which can threaten a relapse of conflict. Another such factor which must be addressed to ensure social stability is poverty and employment. It can provide opportunities for citizens to help the countries economy but also attract refugees, which fled the war-torn region. Many countries and organisations invest efforts into reestablishing the social well-being of the nation, of which employment and poverty reduction is a major part of. Major organisations which support efforts to reinstitute the social expectations of the population and are led by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the UNDP, include but are not limited to UN organisations such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Department of Political Affairs (DPA), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as well as the



Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank etc.

## Major Parties Involved

### UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme or UNDP is a subsection of the UN, which focuses on the development of countries which require aid. Such countries involve post-conflict nations, which means that the UNDP plays a major role in supporting recovering countries and populations. The UNDP aid countries through for example restoring livelihoods, shelters and government capacities. The UNDP also work closely together with other organisations such as the World Bank to oversee and the development of post-conflict nations.

### The World Bank

The World Bank is an organisation comprised of the governments of 184 member nations which focuses on supporting nations and others through financial aid. It includes departments such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), which focuses on poverty reduction and the International Development Association (IDA), which provides interest-free loans to the world's 81 poorest nations. Since the 1990s, the World bank has been increasingly involved in post-conflict rehabilitations

Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) are international banks such as the World Bank or the European bank, which provided large funds to actions carried out by organisations such as the UN. They are also essential in combining the interests of national banks, to ensure their actions are overseen, and handled such as in the Greece financial crisis.

### Peacekeepers

Peacekeepers are also mainly referred to the United Nations Police (UNPOL). They ensure the peace in countries of conflict and in post-conflict regions. Their missions serve to make sure all the proposed and accepted guidelines of the UN are respected in the country and can therefore be seen as a law enforcement or military of the UN. Currently, around 12,500 UN Police officers are deployed in 12 UN peacekeeping and 6 UN DPA-led Special Political Missions.

### More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs)

A MEDC also known as a More Economically Developed Country is a nation which has a high standard of living for its citizens. This is determined depending on the birth and death



rate, life expectancy, housing, infant mortality, literacy, and average income. MEDCs are very important in the issue of restoring economic and social stability, since they for a large part provide the aid which post-conflict countries require to rehabilitate after the war. Once the post-conflict nation has rebuilt its systems so that it can sustain itself without the threat of a relapse, the MEDCs are no longer required to aid the countries in need.

## Timeline of Key Events

Timeline of events in reverse chronological order leading up to present day.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
<b>1815</b>	David Ricardo first examined the subject of post-war recovery and claimed a need for the reorientation of capital flows towards peace activities.
<b>1920</b>	First international effort to rehabilitate post-war Austria, led by the league of nations
<b>1948</b>	First World Bank funded restoration of Europe after World War 2. Along with this, the Marshall Plan was carried out and proved itself as one of the most successful post-conflict initiatives.
<b>May 2001</b>	The UNDP founds a Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery also mainly aimed at post-conflict rehabilitation.
<b>July 2009 - Jan 2011</b>	The UN security council passes multiple resolutions exclusively targeting post-conflict rehabilitation.
<b>February 2014</b>	The UNDPKO publishes a policy to oversee and control the missions of the peacekeepers in post-conflict regions.

## Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Previously the UNDP has tried to resolve this issue with multiple attempts in post-conflict regions. With the help of organizations such as the World Bank and other nations the UNDP has



built shelters, worked with the targeted states to create opportunities for employment and worked with the FAO for example to increase the independence of the country by building up their independent food source for the population. Together with the UN, nations are constantly trying to find solutions to resolve the issue of successfully restoring economic and social stability in post-war regions. The security council has passed multiple resolutions<sup>1</sup>, which also note the "critical importance of peacebuilding as the foundation for sustainable peace and development in the aftermath of conflict" (Mohammed Loulichki, 2012). A resolution passed by the security council in 2014<sup>2</sup> aims to improve the guidelines adopted by the UN. The resolution highlighted for example the importance of security for the society to help restore social stability: "*Stressing* that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict, and *further stressing* that, in this regard, a professional, effective and accountable security sector and accessible and impartial law-enforcement and justice sectors are equally necessary to laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development." (UN Security council, April 2014).

The ECOSOC committee has also proposed multiple resolutions which will help highlight any gaps which threaten to undermine peacebuilding. These resolutions partially aim to help the economic reconstruction of countries, as well as focusing on the social stabilisation of the country and the government within the country. In the reports, peacekeeping missions are also handled which report the accordance of the security council.

Other approaches at supporting the at ensuring stability are peacekeeping operations aimed at preventing a region to relapse into conflict during the restoration process. Such an approach includes a policy of the UNDPKO<sup>3</sup> expressing the policy of United Nations Police in peacekeeping operations.

## Possible Solutions

Possible solutions to this problem include some basic solutions and some more specific ones. This issue can be addressed by the ECOSOC committee through means such as

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. Security Council resolutions S/PRST/2009/23 (22 July 2009) available at <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2009/23>, and S/PRST/2010/20 (13 October 2010) available under <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2010/20>, and S/PRST/2011/2 (21 January 2011) available at <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2011/2>, and S/PRST/2011/4 (11 February 2011) available in <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2011/4>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. Security Council resolution S/RES/2151 (2014) available at [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2151\(2014\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2151(2014))

<sup>3</sup> UNDPKO, and UNDFS. "Policy on United Nations Police in Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions (2014) Police." *United Nations Police*, United Nations, 1 Feb. 2014, [www.police.un.org/sites/default/files/sgf-policy-police-2014.pdf](http://www.police.un.org/sites/default/files/sgf-policy-police-2014.pdf).



proposing strict resolutions on the activity of UN peacekeepers in regions of post-conflict restoration. This is to ensure that the peacekeepers aid the country in creating security in the country during the first few stages of the 'peace milestones', but also to guarantee that the country will build up their own police force and other law enforcement during this time.

Following this point, it is perhaps another solution to make sure that the strategy of establishing the UN security council created 'peace milestones' are the baseline for all or at least most restorations of economic and social stability, which is the target of this issue. These peace milestones should perhaps be reviewed to make them more detailed and clear to follow and apply, whilst keeping in mind that they should be general enough to address and be applicable to many different post-conflict situations in order to rebuild a stable economy and society, since often the response to these situations varied depending on the type of war it was (for example a civil war or large-scale war).

In order to help the nation build up their economy, it may be another possible solution to support the states banking system, so that the country is not dependant on other countries which could hinder the reconstruction the country's economy. Therefore it may be advisable to allocate funding into developing national banks to make the country less dependent on funding provided by supporting countries.

Remaining on the topic of funding, the research has shown that it is also advisable to give the population of the reconstructing country, most if not all democratic power for example, to let them decide how much of the funding is allocated to which sectors. This will not only increase the popularity amongst the citizens but also help the social stabilisation process because it could present the start of a stable governing of the country.

Another possibly effective approach is to revise the policies and resolutions concerning the UNDP's aiding programs in post-conflict regions. This will ensure that the nations affected by these resolutions and policies do not for example sidetrack into an economic disaster when reconstructing their economy. For example is the country only focuses on economic growth, it will undermine other aspects concerned by their economic development. The UNDP could therefore revise such documents to keep them recent and relevant to all current situations.

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## Appendices

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