

# The Peacebuilding Commission at 20: Progress, Challenges, and the Road Ahead



Visit of the Peacebuilding Commission Chair, H.E. Mr. Ivan Simonović, to the African Union Commission from 13 to 14 November 2023.

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## Introduction

Two decades since the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) as an integral part of the UN system’s peacebuilding architecture, its practice has evolved, and its body of work has expanded significantly, particularly since the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture (PBAR). On a few occasions, it has managed to translate commitments into tangible change in different contexts. Notwithstanding this progress, the PBC still has work to do to position itself as a key part of the constellation of actors supporting

peacebuilding efforts at the global, regional and national levels.

The Pact for the Future, adopted by world leaders at the Summit of the Future on 22 September 2024, provides much-needed political momentum by reaffirming the commitment of UN members to strengthening peacebuilding efforts, while the 2025 PBAR, the fourth so far, presents an opportunity to focus on operational effectiveness and impact.<sup>1</sup> The challenge is navigating the sea of recommendations presented over

<sup>1</sup> Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, (September 2024), <[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-pact\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_adopted.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf)>.

# Introduction

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the years and focusing on feasible actions that can help the PBC demonstrate its complementary value in a world facing heightened levels of violent conflict, displacement, and geopolitical instability.

This report examines the trajectory of the PBC over the past 20 years, highlighting both its achievements and limitations. It explores how the PBC can refine its role, overcome key barriers to effectiveness, and enhance its responsiveness to country needs. Following a brief discussion of the historical impetus behind its establishment and an overview of its early years, the report examines progress

and challenges since the 10-year PBAR, including its relationship with the Security Council. It focuses on efforts to broaden its preventive approach, elevate its political profile, strengthen partnerships, and enhance synergies with the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). It also assesses ways to support UN transitions, advance women, peace and security (WPS) and youth, peace and security (YPS) commitments, and strengthen its advisory and bridging roles. Building on this analysis, the report offers practical recommendations within the PBC's existing mandate to enhance its impact in sustaining peace.

## PBC History and Background

### The Impetus

The impetus that led to the Peacebuilding Architecture can be traced to the challenges the UN faced in responding to the surge of intra-state conflicts during the 1990s, which underscored the urgent need for the UN to do more to address the structural roots of conflict and support countries in their transition from war to sustainable peace. In 1992, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's "An Agenda for Peace" introduced the term "peace-building", defining it as "post-conflict action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict".<sup>2</sup> The report also placed emphasis on "building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war". In his 1995 "Supplement to the Agenda for Peace", Ghali expanded the concept of peacebuilding, emphasising its applicability primarily in post-conflict settings while also recognising its potential to prevent conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

Ten years later, amid mounting pressure to restore credibility from the UN's failures in preventing mass atrocities and sustaining peace, Kofi Annan appointed a High-Level Panel to strengthen the organisation's role in

global security. The genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica had already exposed the devastating consequences of inaction, while post-conflict struggles in Sierra Leone and Liberia underscored the limitations of traditional peacekeeping.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the crises in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated that military intervention alone was insufficient to achieve lasting peace, reinforcing the urgent need for a more comprehensive and proactive approach to peacebuilding. Among the 101 recommendations contained in the panel's report, "A more secure world: our shared responsibility", was a proposal for the Security Council to establish a peacebuilding commission and a recommendation for the creation of a peacebuilding support office in the Secretariat to support the PBC.<sup>5</sup> It also suggested the creation of a standing fund for peacebuilding. The proposal envisioned a prevention role for the PBC, supported by early warning analyses submitted by a Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). In his subsequent "In Larger Freedom" report, Annan did not agree with the proposal to give the PBC an early warning or monitoring function.<sup>6</sup> Fearing that such a role might fail to gain approval, he suggested instead that member states could seek the Peacebuilding Commission's advice

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization, 'An Agenda for Peace', (17 June 1992) (A/47/277) (S/24111).

<sup>3</sup> Supplement to the Agenda for Peace (25 January 1995) (A/50/60) (S/1995/1).

<sup>4</sup> Susana SáCouto, 'Reflections on the Judgment of the International Court of Justice in Bosnia's Genocide Case against Serbia and Montenegro', Human Rights Brief, 15, no.1 (2007), <<https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1000&context=hrbrief>>.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (2 December 2004) (A/59/565).

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on In larger freedom: towards development, security, and human rights for all (21 March 2005) (A/59/2005).

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and request assistance from his standing fund for peacebuilding to build their domestic institutions—a practice that has since become well established. Annan posited that there existed a “gaping hole” at the UN in which “no part of the United Nations effectively addresses the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace”. The peacebuilding architecture was meant to fill this need.

### Establishment and Membership

The 2005 World Summit Outcome endorsed Annan’s recommendation for the establishment of the PBC to address critical gaps in post-conflict recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding efforts.<sup>7</sup> Three months later, on 20 December 2005, General Assembly resolution A/60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 established the PBC as an advisory body.<sup>8</sup> The substantively identical resolutions also established the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), now part of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and the UN-managed Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Together, these make up the UN’s peacebuilding architecture. The resolutions mandated the PBC to:

- Bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
- Focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development; and
- Provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable

financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.

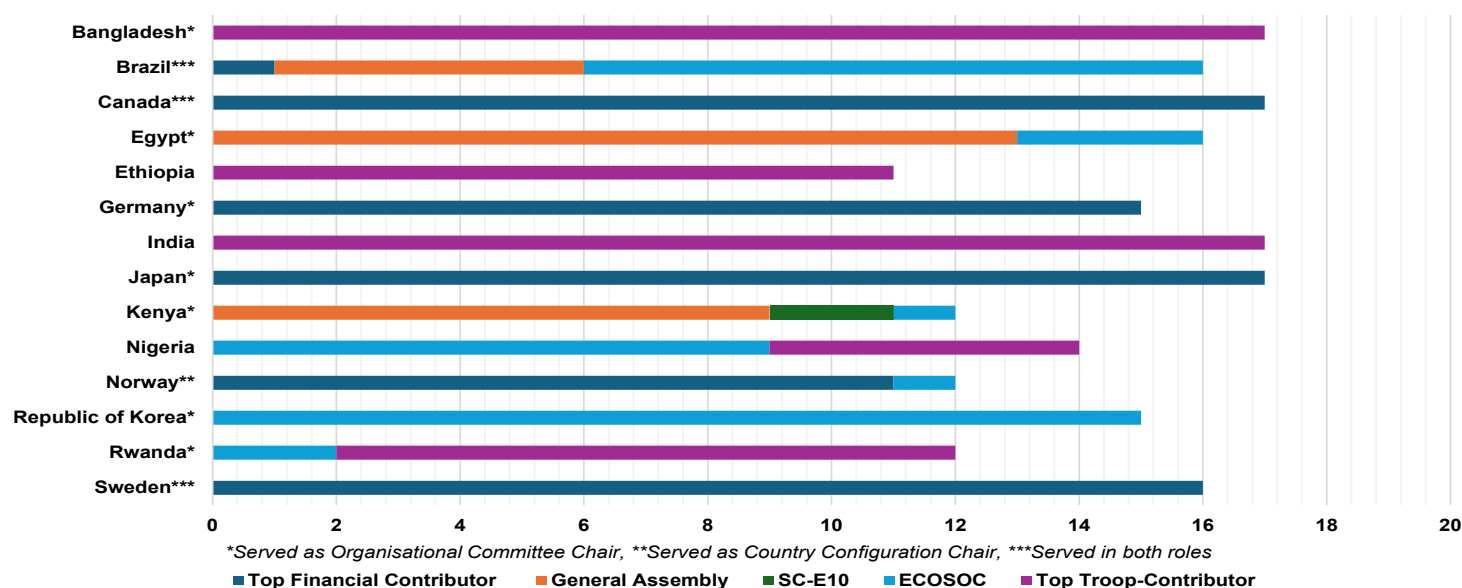
This core mandate was reaffirmed through resolutions arising from the 2010, 2015 and 2020 Reviews of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture.<sup>9</sup>

The founding resolutions also determined that the Commission shall have a standing Organizational Committee comprising 31 member states. These include seven Security Council members, seven Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) members, seven General Assembly members, five top troop-contributing countries (TCCs), and five top financial contributors. Members selected by the Security Council serve one-year terms, while those elected from ECOSOC and the GA serve two-year terms, which can be renewed if they are re-elected. The Chair of the PBC is selected by the Commission’s membership for a one-year term, rotating among the UN’s five regional groups (African group, Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Western European and Other States Group).

Resolution 1646, adopted on the same day the PBC was established, ensured that the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council would have guaranteed seats on the PBC.<sup>10</sup> These seats are part of the seven spots reserved for the Council for the Commission’s membership.

Beyond the P5, a recurring group of countries have frequently secured election to the PBC between 2006 and 2025. Their sustained presence is due to their diplomatic influence, regional importance,

### YEARS ON THE PBC ORGANISATIONAL COMMITTEE BY ELECTION OR CONTRIBUTOR STATUS



7 General Assembly Resolution 60/1 (16 September 2005) (A/RES/60/1).

8 General Assembly Resolution 60/180 (20 December 2005) (A/RES/60/180); Resolution 1645 (20 December 2005) (S/RES/1645).

9 2010 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (21 July 2010) (A/64/868–S/2010/393); General Assembly Resolution 70/62 (12 May 2016) (A/RES/70/262)–Resolution 2282 (27 April 2016) (S/RES/2282); General Assembly Resolution 75/201 (28 December 2020) (A/RES/75/201)–Resolution 2558 (21 December 2020) (S/RES/2558).

10 Resolution 1646 (20 December 2005) (S/RES/1646).

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and commitment to multilateralism. As shown in the graph above, this group includes countries from Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda), Asia [Bangladesh, India, Japan, (Republic of Korea)], Europe (Germany, Norway, Sweden) and the Americas (Brazil, Canada).<sup>11</sup>

Permanent representatives from many of these countries have also assumed the Chairmanship of the PBC Organisational Committee: Bangladesh (2012, 2022); Brazil (2014, 2024); Canada (2020); Egypt (2021); Germany (2010, 2025); Japan (2008); RoK (2017); Kenya (2016); Rwanda (2011); and Sweden (2015).

Some of these permanent representatives have also chaired the PBC's country-specific configurations, which were established in its early years to focus on specific post-conflict contexts. Brazil has chaired the Guinea-Bissau configuration since 2007; Sweden, the Burundi configuration from 2006 to 2009 and the Liberia configuration from 2012 to date; and Canada, the Sierra Leone configuration from 2009 until its conclusion in 2020. In addition, Morocco has chaired the Central African Republic (CAR) configuration since 2014. Past configuration chairs also include Belgium for CAR (2008-2013), Luxembourg for Guinea (2011-2017), The Netherlands for Sierra Leone (2006-2009),<sup>12</sup> and Switzerland for Burundi (2009-2022).<sup>13</sup>

The other countries whose permanent representatives to the UN have had the PBC Chair are Angola (2007); Chile (2009); Colombia (2019); Croatia (2013, 2023); and Romania (2018).

### The PBC's Early Years

In its first decade, the PBC largely focused on six African countries. Country-specific configurations were set up for Sierra Leone and Burundi (2006), Guinea-Bissau (2007), CAR (2008), Liberia (2010) and Guinea (2011), each chaired by a UN permanent representative with its own membership that included not just PBC members but other relevant stakeholders, such as neighbouring countries, key donors and regional organisations.

The PBC supported peace consolidation in Sierra Leone by mobilising international support for building the capacity of electoral institutions, improving governance, and implementing national strategies for youth employment and justice reforms.<sup>14</sup> In Burundi, it worked to support efforts to align international support with national priorities. In Liberia, it emphasised governance reforms and economic recovery. In the CAR, the PBC worked to advance security sector reform, foster reconciliation, and bridge divides among the government, opposition factions, and armed groups. In Guinea-Bissau, it focused on security sector reform, combating drug trafficking, and promoting political dialogue.<sup>15</sup> In these and other countries,

such as Nepal, Haiti, and South Sudan, the PBF provided rapid funding to address critical gaps, stabilise fragile contexts, and support peacebuilding priorities (A/64/866-S/2010/386).<sup>16</sup>

The 2010 review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/64/868-S/2010/393) acknowledged progress but noted that the PBC had yet to realise its full potential, citing challenges in coherence, resource mobilisation, and impact.<sup>17</sup> A year later, the Guinea configuration was established, marking the first instance where a country was added to the PBC's agenda through a direct request from the country to the PBC Chair rather than a referral from the Security Council. This created a new opportunity for the PBC to provide support for a country's peacebuilding efforts. A review on the PBC's engagement in Guinea from 2011 to 2016 acknowledged progress in security sector reform, national reconciliation, and socio-economic initiatives for youth and women, supported by the PBC configuration, while also noting persisting challenges in police reform, governance, and resource mobilisation.<sup>18</sup> The review recommended ending the country-specific configuration and transitioning to a flexible engagement model, allowing Guinea to seek targeted support as needed while emphasising continued reforms and resource mobilisation to sustain peace.

As the PBC neared the end of its first decade, there was growing recognition among members of the need to limit its overreliance on country-specific configurations. There was an emerging consensus on the need to invigorate the role of the Organisational Committee, with the expectation that this would enable it to engage with a broader range of peacebuilding challenges and adopt more flexible approaches to its work. This sentiment was further reinforced during the 2015 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR).

### The Ten-Year Peacebuilding Architecture Review: A Turning Point

The ten-year PBAR took place amid increasing recognition of the need to address fragmented efforts, inconsistent integration across UN pillars, significant resource constraints, and difficulties in aligning international peacebuilding efforts with national priorities. Some also viewed the PBC's limited authority as an impediment to its role as an effective coordinating and advisory body, thereby limiting its impact in different contexts.<sup>19</sup>

The 2015 PBAR was informed by a report that an independent Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) published in June 2015.<sup>20</sup> The AGE report advanced the concept of "sustaining peace," redefining peacebuilding as a continuous process encompassing conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery, rather than focusing solely on post-conflict scenarios. The report emphasised the importance

11 Years served, between 2006 and 2025, on the PBC Organisational Committee through election (GA, ECOSOC, SC-E10) or as a top financial or troop contributor. Permanent Security Council members are excluded.

12 On 25 February 2009, Ambassador John McNee of Canada replaced Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands as chairman of the PBC Sierra Leone configuration.

13 Ambassador Peter Maurer of Switzerland assumed the chairmanship of the PBC Burundi Configuration on 29 June 2009, succeeding Ambassador Anders Lidén of Sweden.

14 Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (3 December 2007) (PBC/2/SLE/1).

15 Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (25 July 2007) (A/62/137-S/2007/458); Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second session (24 June 2008) (A/63/92-S/2008/417); Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session (8 September 2009) (A/64/341-S/2009/444); Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its fourth session (28 January 2011) (A/65/701-S/2011/41).

16 Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (16 July 2010) (A/64/866-S/2010/386); Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict (8 October 2012) (A/67/499-S/2012/746); Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict (23 September 2014) (A/69/399-S/2014/694).

17 2010 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (21 July 2010) (A/64/868-S/2010/393).

18 Review of the Engagement between Guinea and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 2011-2016, <<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/1704-pbc-gui-review-report-english.pdf>>.

19 Cedric de Coning and Eli Stannnes (editors), 'UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The First 10 Years', Routledge, (2016).

20 Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (30 June 2015) (A/69/968-S/2015/490).

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of better integration across the UN's peace and security, development, and human rights pillars, advocating for a more coordinated approach to address the root causes of conflict. It also highlighted the value of national ownership and inclusivity, underscoring the roles of women, youth, and marginalised groups in fostering sustainable peace. The report recommended strengthening the PBC's advisory role to the Security Council and General Assembly, enhancing its ability to provide strategic coherence. Recognising that financing for efforts to sustain peace was scarce, inconsistent, and unpredictable, the report called for regular, predictable, and adequate funding. It recommended allocating an annual core contribution to the PBF of \$100 million or 1 percent of the total United Nations budget for peace operations, whichever is higher, derived from assessed contributions, as a symbolic gesture of commitment.

The review culminated with General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/262 and Security Council resolution S/RES/2282, which adopted many of the AGE's recommendations and remain the UN's most comprehensive framework on peacebuilding.<sup>21</sup> The resolutions emphasised the need for the PBC to foster coherence across the UN's peace and security, development, and human rights pillars, aligning its efforts with the broader concept of "sustaining peace". They encouraged the PBC to engage more effectively with the Security Council, General Assembly, and ECOSOC, as well as regional organisations and international financial institutions (IFIs). They underscored the importance of preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict, highlighting the PBC's role in bringing strategic coherence to peacebuilding efforts and

fostering sustained international support. This stronger emphasis on peacebuilding throughout the peace continuum, rather than focusing solely on the post-conflict phase, elevated the PBC's potential to address systemic challenges and signalled a move toward a more integrated and inclusive approach to global peacebuilding.<sup>22</sup>

The 2016 resolutions underscored the need for adequate, predictable, and sustained financing as central to the "sustaining peace" agenda, emphasising the importance of supporting efforts across the peace continuum. They highlighted the PBF as a critical mechanism for providing timely and flexible support to address gaps in peacebuilding efforts and encouraged UN members to make sustained, multi-year contributions to enhance its effectiveness. The resolutions requested the Secretary-General to present options for increasing, restructuring, and better prioritising resources for UN peacebuilding activities, including through voluntary and assessed contributions. The resolutions also stressed the importance of financing initiatives that promote inclusivity and gender equality, particularly by empowering women, as fundamental to sustaining peace. By linking peacebuilding financing to broader development frameworks, the resolutions marked a significant step toward strengthening the UN's ability to address systemic challenges in a more integrated and effective manner. These commitments reflected an ambitious vision for overcoming systemic resource challenges and operationalising a more coherent, inclusive, and effective peacebuilding financing framework, though their realisation depended heavily on UN members' political will and financial commitments.

## Evolution and Challenges since the 10-year PBAR

### Broader Preventive Lens

Since the ten-year review, the PBC has undergone significant changes. It has expanded its consideration of country and regional situations, moving away from creating country configurations and instead addressing new situations through its Organisational Committee. Today, only the country configurations for the CAR, Guinea-Bissau, and Liberia remain. Following the conclusion of Guinea's configuration in 2017, the Sierra Leone and Burundi configurations concluded at the end of 2020 and 2022, respectively.<sup>23</sup> As shown in the graph below, the PBC's engagements increased from its six country configurations before the ten-year PBAR, to having considered 31 country and regional situations by the end of 2024.<sup>24</sup>

The breadth of its engagements has spanned across countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific, highlighting the diversity

of contexts, needs, and approaches required for effective peacebuilding. Examples include meetings on Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in Latin America; The Gambia, Burkina Faso, South Sudan and Mozambique in Africa; and Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste in Asia. In 2023, the PBC discussed indigenous peoples and reconciliation, including in Norway and Canada, to show the universality of peacebuilding.

The PBC has also expanded the scope of regional UN mandates and strategies it considers, beginning with West Africa in 2014 and later placing significant emphasis on the regional UN strategy for the Sahel. To date, its regional engagements have included Central Asia, the Great Lakes region, the Gulf of Guinea, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Pacific Islands. Regional UN mandates and strategies offer valuable opportunities for the PBC to complement the

21 General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (12 May 2016) (A/RES/70/262); Resolution 2282 (27 April 2016) (S/RES/2282).

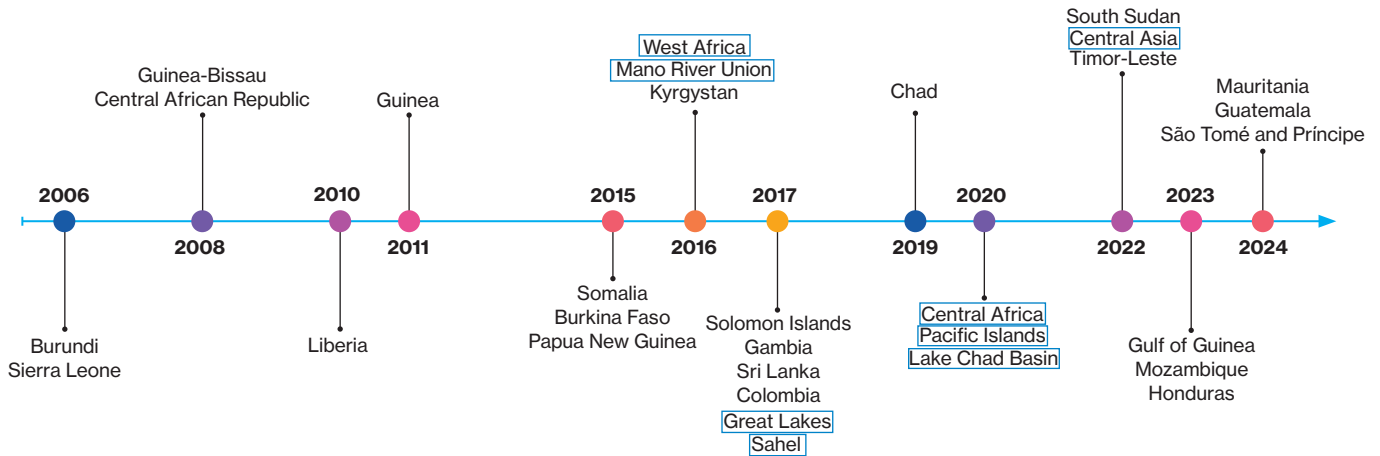
22 Necla Tschirgi and Cedric de Coning, 'The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Enhancing and Moving beyond the United Nations' Peacebuilding Architecture', *Just Security in an Undergoverned World* (edited by William J. Durch et al. Oxford University Press), (2018), 440–460.

23 Note from the Chairperson on the PBC Guinea Configuration: Review of the Engagement between Guinea and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 2011-2016 (10 July 2017), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/20170710\\_14390252.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/20170710_14390252.pdf)>; Chair Summary of the Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone (10 December 2020), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/chairs\\_summary\\_of\\_sierra\\_leone\\_meeting.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/chairs_summary_of_sierra_leone_meeting.pdf)>; Press Statement on the Burundi Configuration (21 December 2022), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/revised\\_221219\\_-\\_burundi\\_closure\\_-\\_press\\_release\\_rev1\\_-\\_approved.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/revised_221219_-_burundi_closure_-_press_release_rev1_-_approved.pdf)>.

24 SCR's calculations are based on the countries and regions included in the country and regional engagement sections of the PBC's annual reports. Canada, Nepal, and Norway are not included in SCR's count, as the meeting concerning these countries was reported under the 'Cross-cutting and thematic engagements' section of the PBC report on its seventeenth session, (A/78/765-S/2024/153) (9 February 2024).

# Evolution and Challenges since the 10-year PBAR

## COUNTRIES AND REGIONS CONSIDERED BY THE PBC



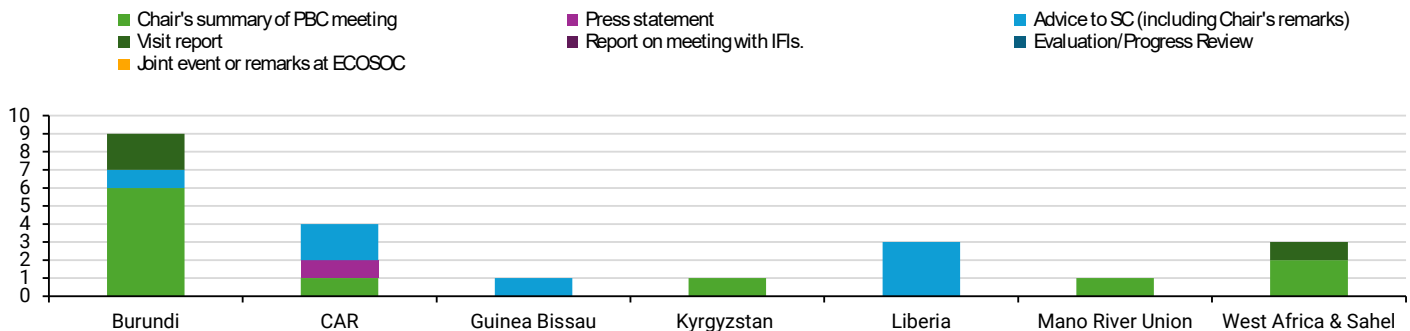
Security Council’s work. These strategies are inherently multidisciplinary, addressing development, humanitarian, human rights, and security dimensions that cut across UN pillars. As a result, the Security Council often lacks the bandwidth to address them in detail. The PBC has sought to fill this gap, a good example of its efforts being several joint high-level events between ECOSOC and the PBC on the situation in the Sahel in 2018 and 2019<sup>25</sup>, resulting in an ECOSOC resolution in 2019 that directed the UN development system to provide more robust, coordinated support to the Sahel.<sup>26</sup> These events exemplified the PBC’s bridging role and its potential to foster coherence and collaboration across the UN system.

The flexible schedule of the Organisational Committee meetings is widely appreciated by many countries, who feel empowered to tailor the nature of their interaction with the PBC, ensuring that it aligns with their priorities and needs. The ability to determine the timing, frequency, and substantive focus of the PBC meetings fosters a sense of ownership and agency in the peacebuilding process. However, this expanded and flexible programme of work has come at a cost. The PBC’s attention to countries and regions has, at times, been perceived as ad hoc and fleeting. The graphs below illustrate

that, from 2016 to 2024, PBC configurations, particularly Burundi, CAR, and Liberia, maintained a relatively stable level of output compared to the more flexible agenda of the Organisational Committee, with the exception perhaps of PBC engagements on West Africa and the Sahel.<sup>27</sup> This is largely due to the Organizational Committee’s meeting schedule depending on continuing requests from countries to be considered by the PBC. Moreover, the effectiveness of its efforts is not solely determined by the number of PBC output documents, but, more importantly, by the quality and timeliness of the support it provides to the countries that request its assistance.

Fluctuations in the Organisational Committee’s activity may also indicate constraints in time and resources that limit effective follow-up on its engagements, particularly its ability to help raise funds for peacebuilding activities that remain critically underfunded.<sup>28</sup> The PBC also grapples with managing the growing workload of the Organisational Committee. In 2020, it held 40 ambassadorial-level meetings—a record, partly due to meetings being held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, however, the number of meetings has steadily declined, reflecting limited human resources and conference facilities.

## 2016



25 ECOSOC and PBC Joint Meeting Summary (28 June 2017), <<https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/d7-files/files/en/2017doc/ecosoc-pbc-joint-meeting-summary.pdf>>; Concept Note of ECOSOC and PBC Joint Meeting (13 November 2018), <[https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/d7-files/files/en/2018doc/ecosoc\\_pbc\\_joint\\_meeting\\_concept\\_note.pdf](https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/d7-files/files/en/2018doc/ecosoc_pbc_joint_meeting_concept_note.pdf)>.

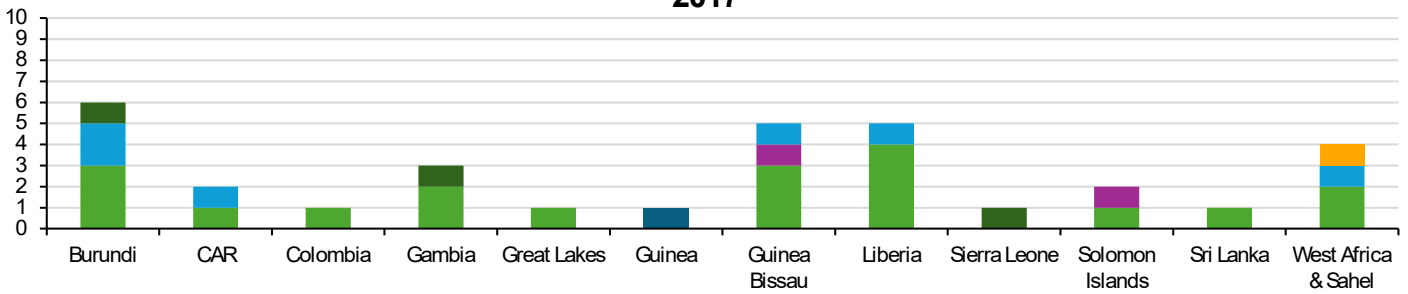
26 Economic and Social Council Resolution 2020/2 (10 December 2019) (E/RES/2020/2).

27 Numbers calculated based relevant PBC outcome documents found in Peacebuilding Commission Documents | PEACEBUILDING

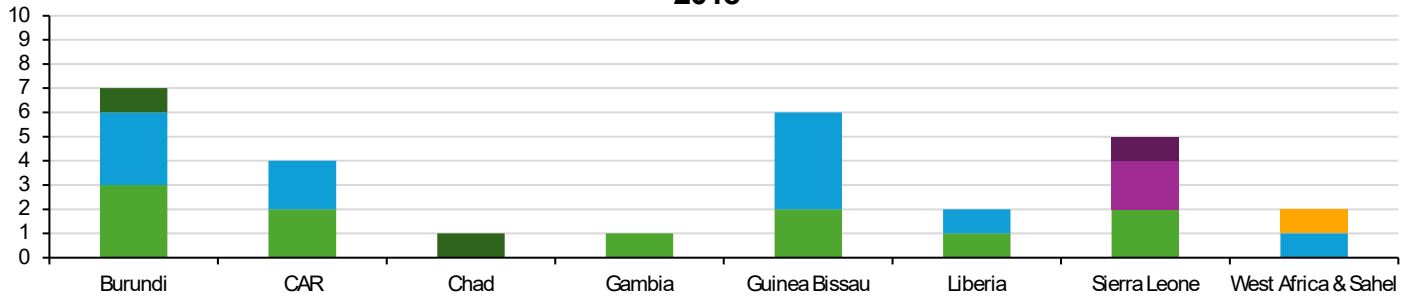
28 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (25 November 2024) (A/79/552-S/2024/767).

# Evolution and Challenges since the 10-year PBAR

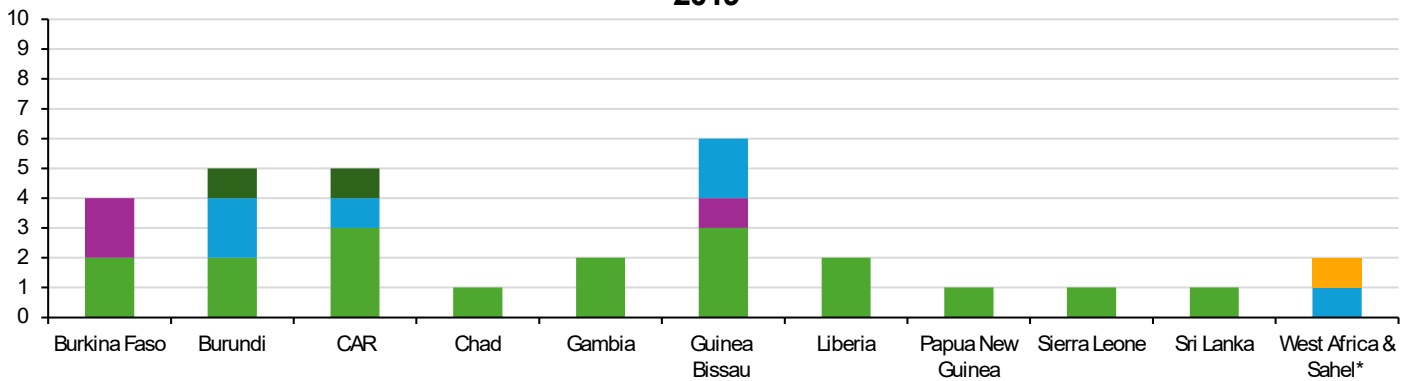
2017



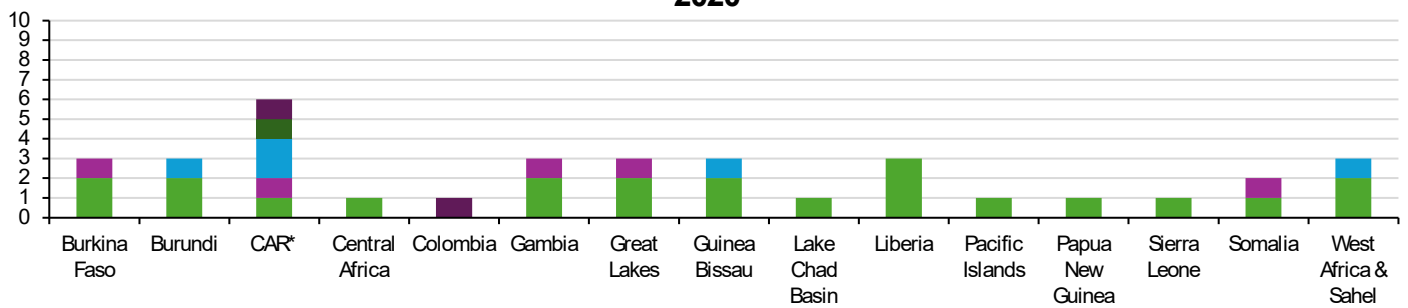
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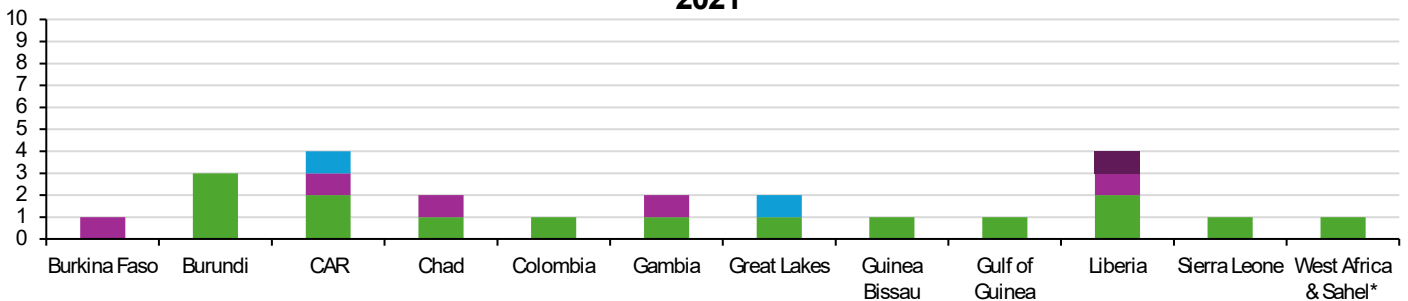
2019



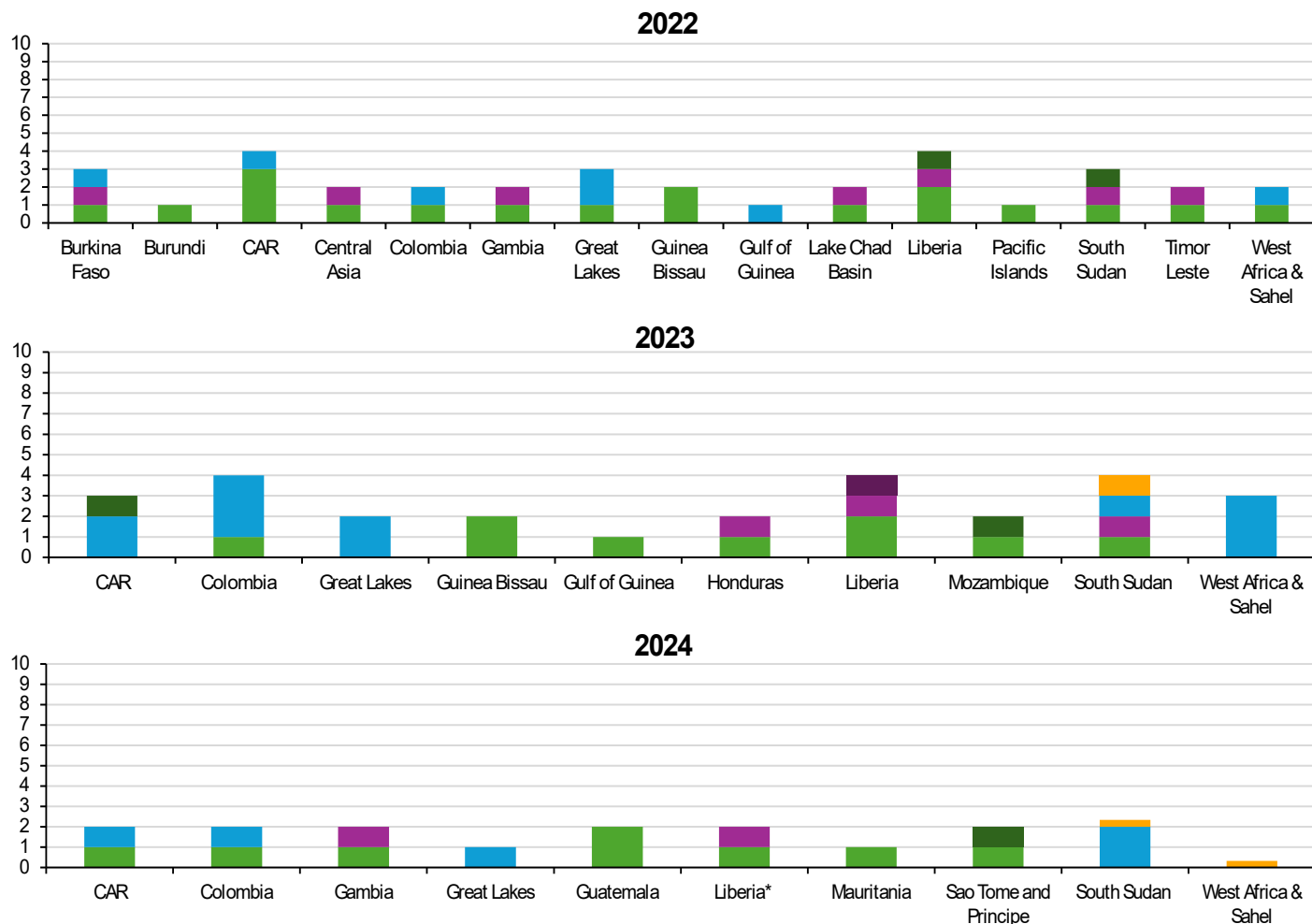
2020



2021



# Evolution and Challenges since the 10-year PBAR



## Elevated Political Profile

Since 2016, the PBC has raised its political profile by increasing the frequency of its high-level events and official visits.

## High-level Meeting on Burkina Faso

One example was a high-level meeting on Burkina Faso on 26 September 2019, which brought together the President of Burkina Faso, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, the President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez – who chaired the meeting as Colombia held the PBC chair at the time – and key international representatives from the AU, UN, and the World Bank.<sup>29</sup> This meeting underscored the PBC’s capacity to convene high-level actors to address critical peacebuilding challenges. The meeting followed an official request by the Burkinabe government in June 2019 for support from its primary development partners – the UN, World Bank, EU, and African Development Bank – to conduct a Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA) looking at opportunities and risks in its six regions facing the greatest uptick in insecurity and humanitarian need. The joint assessment led to the development of a framework, Programme d’urgence pour le Sahel au Burkina Faso (PUS-BF), to guide future development plans in four thematic areas for intervention (security and rule of law, social services, local governance,

and resilience and social cohesion). The PBC followed these developments closely, and after a March 2020 meeting aimed at addressing the situation in Burkina Faso, the Chair of the Commission sent a letter to the Burkinabe Minister of Economy, Finance, and Development, summarising over \$400 million in pledges to support his government’s Emergency Programme for the Sahel.<sup>30</sup>

While this initiative underscored the PBC’s commitment to aligning international obligations with national priorities, Burkina Faso’s escalating security challenges and deteriorating conditions since then reveal that these efforts, though valuable, have been insufficient. As important as it is to raise the political profile of PBC engagement in support of underfunded and critical peacebuilding priorities, Burkina Faso’s situation highlights the need for such initiatives to be far more proactive and robust.

29 Chair’s Summary of the Peacebuilding Commission’s High-Level Meeting on Burkina Faso (26 September 2019), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/chairs\\_summary\\_pbc\\_high\\_level\\_meeting\\_on\\_burkina\\_faso\\_26\\_september\\_2019\\_final.docx](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/chairs_summary_pbc_high_level_meeting_on_burkina_faso_26_september_2019_final.docx)>.

30 Letter from the PBC Chair to H.E. Mr. Lassané Kaboré, Minister of Economy, Finance and Development of Burkina Faso (06 November 2020), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc\\_chairs\\_follow-up\\_letter\\_on\\_burkina\\_faso.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc_chairs_follow-up_letter_on_burkina_faso.pdf)>.



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## High-level PBC meeting in Colombia

Another example of the PBC's heightened profile was the high-level meeting held in Cartagena in January 2020 during Colombia's transition of its PBC chairmanship to Canada. Chaired by President Iván Duque Márquez, this was the first PBC meeting held outside New York, focusing on innovative financing for peacebuilding and strengthening partnerships with international financial institutions. Before the formal discussions, participants visited an

exhibition showcasing products from former combatants, survivors, and local communities, where Colombia's Foreign Minister, Claudia Blum; the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, Emilio Archila; and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, highlighted the role of the private sector for sustainable peacebuilding in Colombia.

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## Strengthened Partnerships

The PBC's coordination with IFIs has evolved over the years into a more purposeful endeavour, with increased joint meetings and a focus on fostering alignment between peacebuilding priorities and IFI strategies. This has been achieved both through general advocacy for conflict-sensitive financial instruments, such as the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Strategy; the IMF's Strategy for Fragile and Conflict-Affected States; and the Inter-American Development Bank's inaugural Framework for Supporting Populations in Situations of Fragility, Conflict, and Criminal Violence (FCCV), and through targeted country engagements. For example, in Liberia, the PBC facilitated consultations with the World Bank and IMF to align their financial and technical support with national peacebuilding goals, such as governance reforms, gender equality, and social cohesion. The PBC acted as a convener, bringing together stakeholders to identify key drivers of fragility and prioritise interventions, such as land management and youth empowerment initiatives.

However, significant gaps remain in translating high-level PBC dialogues into impactful local actions. At meetings in New York, PBC members often look to PBSO for ideas on how to deepen collaboration with the World Bank and other regional and international financial institutions. Through its Partnership Facility, established in 2019 and supported by the PBF, PBSO advances this work by providing advisory support, funding for joint assessments, and facilitating liaison functions. For example, the Facility has supported joint UN-IFI initiatives in countries such as Chad, The Gambia, and Mozambique, aligning peacebuilding priorities with IFI financing tools and fostering conflict-sensitive approaches to development challenges.<sup>31</sup> Beyond encouraging the continuation of such initiatives in its meetings, the PBC largely struggles to transition from convening dialogues to shaping operational frameworks and ensuring sustained follow-through at the country level.

The Commission has also made efforts to work more closely with regional and subregional organisations and other relevant actors, such as civil society and the private sector. In addition to meeting annually with the African Union Peace and Security Council

(AUPSC) since 2018, in 2024 the PBC extended an open invitation to the African Union to participate in all its meetings. However, AU members in the PBC have consistently called for these efforts to go further, advocating for the annual AUPSC-PBC meetings to be used more strategically—not just for dialogue, but as a platform for planning joint actions, including field visits, and fostering more concrete coordination. Building on its commitment to deepen regional partnerships, the PBC has also extended a standing invitation to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to participate in its work as of 30 January 2025.

In recent years, the PBC has encouraged greater participation of civil society representatives in its meetings, while committing to include the number of civil society briefers in its annual reports and to reflect their recommendations in its outcome documents. The number of civil society representatives briefing the PBC increased from four in 2016 to 27 in 2022, marking a record high.<sup>32</sup> However, this issue has since become more contentious. Some PBC members have pushed to reduce the number of briefers in PBC meetings, arguing that lengthy civil society statements delay opportunities for PBC ambassadors to deliver their remarks early in the meeting. Others have scrutinised the selection process in an effort to avoid open criticism or contradiction of government positions. Civil society participation in these meetings has declined in recent years, with the number of briefers dropping to 23 in 2023<sup>33</sup> and 16 in 2024.<sup>34</sup>

## Synergies with the PBF

To help diversify the PBC's country engagements, the Secretary-General has encouraged countries to present their peacebuilding priorities at the Commission when seeking approval for PBF funding eligibility. In addition, since the 2015 review, PBSO has provided more frequent updates during PBC meetings on relevant PBF programmes. These updates offer valuable insights into the implementation and impact of PBF-supported peacebuilding initiatives, shedding light on best practices and lessons learned that can inform PBC deliberations and action.

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## The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

The founding resolutions of the peacebuilding architecture created the PBF in 2005 to help finance countries' peacebuilding needs, which tend not to receive traditional donor support, and to play a catalytic role that could encourage additional funding from other sources. Ten years later, the AGE highlighted the continued "paucity" in peacebuilding funding. However, it

praised the role of the PBF, particularly for its flexibility and ability to fill urgent financing requirements. The PBF has traditionally been resourced through donor contributions. One of the AGE recommendations to create more money for peacebuilding was to allocate one percent of the value of total UN budgets for peace operations or \$100 million annually (whichever

31 PBSO Partnership Facility (August 2024), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbso\\_partnership\\_facility\\_aug2024.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbso_partnership_facility_aug2024.pdf)>.

32 Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its sixteenth session (17 February 2023) (A/77/720-S/2023/86).

33 Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventeenth session (9 February 2024) (A/78/765-S/2024/153).

34 Based on information found in United Nations Peacebuilding Commission | PEACEBUILDING.

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was greater) to the PBF from UN assessed contributions.

António Guterres began his term as Secretary-General in 2017 calling for a “quantum leap” in the capacity of the PBF that he said should have a \$500 million annual budget. In 2016, the PBF allocated \$70.9 million to 17 countries during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016.<sup>35</sup> In 2017 – the year Guterres called for increasing the PBF’s capacity – the PBF approved \$157,111,033 for 31 countries.<sup>36</sup> In the ensuing years, this amount steadily increased, but has yet to reach Guterres’ annual target. Almost five years into its current strategy period (2020 –2026), voluntary commitments have reached only slightly over half of the targeted amount of \$1.5 billion, totalling \$789 million. Despite slight improvements in burden sharing among voluntary donors and the number of multi-year commitments, total voluntary contributions have been declining since a high of \$180 million in 2020.<sup>37</sup>

Following lengthy negotiations, and in recognition of the fact that voluntary contributions have not been sufficient to meet increasing demands on the PBF, on 22 December 2023, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/78/257, in which United Nations members approved the provision, starting in 2025, of \$50 million annually from UN assessed contributions to the PBF.<sup>38</sup> The agreement reflected a significant shift in position by some large UN financial contributors which had opposed the recommendation in 2015.

The revised terms of reference for the PBF, in compliance with resolution 78/257, encourage greater engagement of the GA and PBC to oversee and provide policy guidance on the use of assessed contributions, particularly in decisions on target country selection, allocation amounts and priority areas of work, whilst maintaining PBF’s agility and flexibility.<sup>39</sup> Previously, member states were rarely involved in such decisions, though the General Assembly and the PBC have historically provided policy guidance based on the

Secretary-General’s annual report on the PBF and the Commission’s country engagements. The PBF operates under the authority of the Secretary-General, with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support responsible for its overall management, supported by the PBF Advisory Group – a twelve-member body nominated by member states and appointed by the Secretary-General. Additionally, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office serves as its fiduciary agent, handling financial management, donor contributions, and disbursements. While DPPA/PBSO approves projects based on eligibility criteria such as inclusiveness, national ownership, catalytic effect, and integrated UN responses, some contributors are concerned about maintaining PBF’s independence, particularly when debating further increases in assessed contributions.

Recognising the PBF as a critical instrument for advancing the ambitions of the Pact for the Future, particularly through support for national prevention and peacebuilding strategies, the eighth Advisory Group, during its first meeting in January 2025, proposed that the extension of the PBF strategy for 2025–2026 should prioritize empowering governments to take the lead in designing and implementing such strategies for their countries, supported by the UN.<sup>40</sup> The first PBC meeting with the eighth PBF Advisory Group, held on 15 January 2025, addressed the need for the PBF and the PBC to work closely together to support countries with the development of national prevention strategies upon request, while noting the challenges posed by the fact that demand for the Fund continues to outstrip its resources.<sup>41</sup>

The Pact for the Future welcomed the General Assembly’s decision to increase the resources available to the PBF.<sup>42</sup> However, member states agree that increasing voluntary contributions will still be essential to meet increasing demand.

## The Commission’s Work on Thematic Issues

Over the years, the Peacebuilding Commission has convened numerous thematic meetings focused on key areas essential for peacebuilding, including governance, security, justice, development, and displacement, among others. These meetings have served as inclusive platforms for exchanging experiences and drawing lessons to enhance peacebuilding efforts. Among these, its work on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas hold significant promise.

The PBC adopted a Gender Strategy and Action Plan and, to ensure accountability, it tasked PBSO with preparing annual assessments on the plan’s implementation.<sup>43</sup> The 2023 assessment highlights progress, including the consistent integration of gender perspectives into PBC meetings and outcome documents, as well as increased consultations with women peacebuilders.<sup>44</sup> However, challenges persist, such as the need for more comprehensive gender

analysis and the inclusion of concrete, actionable strategies in outcome documents.

Through the implementation of its Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding, which underscores the critical role of young people in sustaining peace, the PBC has promoted youth participation in peacebuilding processes, encouraged support for youth-led initiatives, and integrated youth perspectives into its discussions and outcomes.<sup>45</sup> To monitor progress, the PBC tasked PBSO with submitting annual assessments. Based on its 2023 assessment, the PBC faced challenges in ensuring meaningful youth representation, with only two youth organisation representatives invited to brief ambassadorial-level meetings throughout the year.<sup>46</sup> Its recent practice of limiting civil society representation to one per meeting created a trade-off between youth and women peacebuilders, reducing opportunities for simultaneous engagement.

35 Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (14 February 2017) (A/71/792).

36 Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (9 February 2018) (A/72/740).

37 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (25 November 2024) (A/79/552-S/2024/767).

38 General Assembly Resolution 78/257 (22 December 2023) (A/RES/78/257).

39 Report of the Secretary-General on the Revision of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund (21 October 2024) (A/79/541); *Ibid.*

40 Chair’s Summary of the First Meeting of the Eighth Advisory Group to the Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund, (15–16 January 2025), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf\\_advisory\\_group\\_january\\_2025\\_chairs\\_summary.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_advisory_group_january_2025_chairs_summary.pdf)>.

41 Concept Note of the Ambassadorial-level Meeting with the Eighth Advisory Group of the Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund, (15 January 2025), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/updated\\_pbc\\_meeting\\_with\\_pbf\\_ag\\_2025\\_-\\_concept\\_note\\_january\\_2025.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/updated_pbc_meeting_with_pbf_ag_2025_-_concept_note_january_2025.pdf)>.

42 Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, (September 2024), <[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sof-pact\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_adopted.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sof-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf)>.

43 UN Peacebuilding Support Office, ‘The Peacebuilding Commission’s Gender Strategy’, <<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/gender-strategy>>; PBC Gender Strategy Action Plan, <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc\\_gender\\_strategy\\_action\\_plan\\_final.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc_gender_strategy_action_plan_final.pdf)>.

44 Assessment of the Implementation of the Peacebuilding Commission Gender Strategy Action Plan from 1 January to 31 December 2023, <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2023\\_assessment\\_of\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_the\\_peacebuilding\\_commission\\_gender\\_strategy\\_action\\_plan6.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2023_assessment_of_the_implementation_of_the_peacebuilding_commission_gender_strategy_action_plan6.pdf)>.

45 United Nations Peacebuilding Commission Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding, <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc\\_strategic\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_youth\\_and\\_peacebuilding\\_agreed.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc_strategic_action_plan_on_youth_and_peacebuilding_agreed.pdf)>.

46 Assessment of the Implementation of the Peacebuilding Commission Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding from 1 January to 31 December 2023, <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2023\\_assessment\\_of\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_the\\_peacebuilding\\_commission\\_strategic\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_youth\\_and\\_peacebuilding26.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2023_assessment_of_the_implementation_of_the_peacebuilding_commission_strategic_action_plan_on_youth_and_peacebuilding26.pdf)>.

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## The PBC and UN transitions

One of the roles envisioned for the PBC at its founding was to provide a forum that could extend the international community's attention to countries' post-conflict recovery beyond the "duration of a peacekeeping presence".<sup>47</sup> The 2016 PBAR resolutions highlighted the PBC's role in supporting transitions, expressing the Council's intention to draw upon the PBC's advice during "the formation, review and drawdown of peacekeeping operations and special political missions mandates" and emphasised the importance of the Commission's advice when there are "major agreements that relate to UN mission mandates and transitions". The Council's 18 December

2018 presidential statement, its second stand-alone product on the PBC after resolution 1646, "acknowledged" the PBC's role in advising the Council during transitions related to the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations and special political missions and highlighted the "usefulness of the Peacebuilding Commission's advice during the drawdown of UNMIL in Liberia and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone".<sup>48</sup> Resolution 2594 on transitions, adopted on 9 September 2021, reaffirmed the Council's intention to request and consider the PBC's advice, and "strongly" encouraged the PBC to utilise its convening role, "in particular, to facilitate the development of joint objectives and priorities prior to transitions".<sup>49</sup>

## PBC's work during the transition of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

Liberia is regularly cited as one of the best examples of the PBC's work during and following a UN transition. The Liberia country configuration convened meetings on a peacebuilding plan that the Council had requested the UN to develop when it renewed UNMIL's mandate for a final 15-month period in December 2016, and on a subsequent capacity mapping exercise of the UN country team (UNCT) to assume tasks in the plan. These exercises were considered useful in identifying and raising awareness, before UNMIL's

departure, of financial and capacity gaps within the UNCT that donors could then fill. Unfortunately, with the exception of PBF support, donor funding did not fully materialise to fill these gaps.<sup>50</sup> Since UNMIL's withdrawal, the PBC has provided a platform to discuss developments and raise awareness of the government's priorities and needs, including support for the October 2023 general elections, the first since UNMIL completed its mandate and withdrew in 2018.

Despite the Council repeatedly highlighting the PBC's potential to support transition situations, the PBC's engagement on transitions has been limited to countries with existing country-specific configurations. The PBC did not become involved in other recent UN transitions, such as in Côte d'Ivoire (2017), Haiti (2019), Sudan (2019), and Mali (2023). Given the PBC's involvement in South Sudan since late 2022, there is an opportunity for the PBC to support the eventual transition of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), should South Sudan wish to seek that support. In the past, in the context of PBC meetings on the Great Lakes region, there had been informal discussions about the potential role of the PBC in a possible transition of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO). However, the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the DRC in 2024 and early 2025—marked by escalating violence, particularly in the eastern provinces, and renewed offensives by armed groups such as the M23—has overtaken these discussions.

Some of these countries have rejected overtures from the PBC. As noted, engagement with the PBC is voluntary, and the Commission requires not only consent but also a genuine need and desire from the concerned state to discuss the situation and ensure a meaningful outcome and support. Objections from countries that have undergone UN mission transitions reflect concerns about stigmatisation as well as scepticism regarding the benefits of engaging with the PBC. In the case of Haiti, its rejection of multiple attempts at PBC engagement stems from broader distrust of the UN, following more

than two decades of peacekeeping operations that failed to resolve the country's recurrent instability.

These challenges highlight that the PBC has yet to establish itself as a trusted partner in supporting countries' efforts during UN transition settings, underscoring the need for continued engagement, adaptability, and tangible demonstrations of its added value.

## A Consultative Annual Programme of Work

The PBC's annual programme of work follows a demand-driven approach, requiring proactive consultations and joint planning with countries willing to share their peacebuilding experiences. However, the increasing number of meetings under the flexible Organisational Committee format was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in Secretariat resources. Combined with the annual rotation of the chairmanship, this made it challenging to maintain continuity in programme development and ensure timely and effective follow-up.

To address this, in 2022, the PBC conducted early consultations to prepare its country and regional engagements, culminating in a consultative meeting to finalise its annual programme of work. For the first time, the Commission shared its programme of work with the General Assembly and the Security Council through formal communications from the Chair, outlining the countries and regions it planned to consider that year.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the Security Council agreed, through an exchange of letters with the PBC Chair (S/2022/202; S/2022/250) in March 2022, that the PBC would

47 Addendum: Explanatory note by the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Commission (23 May 2005) (A/59/2005/Add.2).

48 Statement by the President of the Security Council, (18 December 2018) (S/PRST/2018/20).

49 Resolution 2594 (9 September 2021) (S/RES/2594).

50 Security Council Report, 'UN Transitions in a Fractured Multilateral Environment', (8 December 2023), <[https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/transitions\\_2023.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/transitions_2023.pdf)>.

51 Provisional Annual Programme of Work of the Peacebuilding Commission, (2022), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/2022\\_pbc\\_work\\_plan\\_-\\_approved\\_002\\_0.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/2022_pbc_work_plan_-_approved_002_0.pdf)>; Letter from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to the President of the General Assembly (8 March 2022), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/letter\\_pbc\\_chair\\_to\\_president\\_of\\_the\\_ga.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/letter_pbc_chair_to_president_of_the_ga.pdf)>.

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receive advance copies of relevant Secretary-General's reports.<sup>52</sup> This practice has reportedly helped the Commission to better plan its advice to the Council.

PBSO shared this development with all concerned UN peace operations, encouraging them to include in the Secretary-General's reports sufficient information about the peacebuilding aspects of their mandates. This practice also helped the Commission to ensure complementarity in its work and advice to the Council. When discussing this practice, PBC and Council members considered resolution 2594 on UN transitions, which requested that the Secretary-General "liaise with the Peacebuilding Commission in advance of relevant reporting to the Security Council to facilitate the provision of complementary and timely advice from the Commission to the Council".<sup>53</sup> The most recent exchange of letters in March 2024 set out that the PBC would continue to receive advance copies of the Secretary-General's reports on 11 country situations and thematic issues which are considered by the Commission.<sup>54</sup>

The current timeline presents a challenge, as the PBC's annual programme of work is typically finalised around March or even April—by which point a quarter of the year has already passed. Given the significant effort required to prepare PBC meetings to ensure they are complementary and impactful, consultations on the programme of work need to happen much earlier in the year. To enhance the effectiveness and timeliness of the planning and execution of its annual programme of work, the PBC decided in January 2024 to expand the number of its vice-chairs from two to four<sup>55</sup>, starting in 2025, and committed to making greater use of their role.<sup>56</sup> On 30 January 2025, Brazil, Japan, Poland and Morocco were elected as PBC vice-chairs under the new scheme.<sup>57</sup>

### Complementary and Advisory Role to the Security Council

The Commission's advisory role to the Council was established and has been actively sought since its creation in 2005 when its country configurations were set up through referrals from the Council. In 2012, Rwanda, having just completed its chairmanship of the PBC and serving as an elected member of the Council (2012–2013), introduced the practice of appointing an informal coordinator between the PBC and the Council on an annual basis. Since then, the PBC has designated one of its members, who also sits on the Council, as the informal coordinator tasked with identifying opportunities for fulfilling its advisory role. Initially, the informal coordinator organised biannual stock-taking sessions among Council members on the

PBC, the PBC chair, and configuration chairs to evaluate the Commission's advice and consider useful practices and activities moving forward. Over the years, these stock-taking sessions have become less frequent, and the informal coordination role has evolved into a more proactive approach—using the Council's programme of work to identify opportunities for the PBC to provide timely advice.

In 2018, the practice of submitting written advice ahead of mandate renewals was introduced when the CAR configuration chair provided recommendations before the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR's (MINUSCA) mandate renewal. Previously, the PBC advised the Council on mandate renewals through briefings, with CSC chairs informally engaging penholders or briefing experts. The number of written submissions has varied over the years, reaching 17 in 2022<sup>58</sup> and 11 in 2024<sup>59</sup>, covering MINUSCA, the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and missions in Guinea-Bissau, Colombia, and South Sudan, among other topics. Beyond mandate renewals, the PBC also has provided advice for Council briefings, debates, and thematic discussions, including on youth, peace and security, and women, peace and security, reflecting the PBC's expanded advisory role and the Security Council's increasing openness to its input.

Despite these efforts, criticism persists regarding the Commission's ability to present new information, analysis, and insights to the Council. Under the Organisational Committee format, the PBC finds it difficult to focus simultaneously on every country and thematic issue in its programme of work as frequently as is required to produce the in-depth analysis and effective follow-up that inform the Council's advice. Additionally, because the PBC operates by consensus, any advice or recommendations must be acceptable to all 31 members. This consensus-based decision-making often results in PBC advice reflecting the lowest common denominator rather than offering cutting-edge insights.

In view of these limitations, a more effective way to view the PBC's relationship with the Council is not solely through the lens of its written or oral submissions but, more importantly, through the complementarity and added value of its work. The more consultative, substantive, demand-driven, and impact-oriented the Commission's programme of work, the more likely that it will have substantive advice—often to the extent that formal written submissions become secondary. When the PBC's work effectively addresses peacebuilding needs in different contexts, its influence extends beyond formal advisory outputs.

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### The Peacebuilding Commission's complementary role in The Gambia

The Security Council became actively engaged with The Gambia's political crisis between December 2016 and January 2017, holding several meetings after then-President Yahya Jammeh initially conceded defeat in the presidential

election but later rejected the results. The Council adopted resolution 2337 (19 January 2017), endorsing the decisions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AU to recognise Adama Barrow as

52 Letter dated 8 March 2022 from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/202); Letter dated 18 March 2022 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2022/250).

53 Resolution 2594 (9 September 2021) (S/RES/2594).

54 Letter dated 11 April 2024 from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/315); Letter dated 16 April 2024 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2024/316).

55 This revision is reflected in the removal of the explicit reference to 'two' Vice-Chairs in the Annex of Rev.2 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission, compared to Rev.1 (2012), which explicitly limited the number to two.

56 The Working Methods of the PBC are contained in the Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its sixteenth session.

57 Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 'This Week in DPPA: 25 - 31 January 2025', <<https://dppa.un.org/en/week-dppa-25-31-january-2025>>.

58 Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its sixteenth session (17 February 2023) (A/77/720-S/2023/86).

59 Based on information provided by the PBSO.

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the legitimate president. Shortly after, on 25 January, following an update on Jammeh's agreement to relinquish power, Council focus on The Gambia largely ceased – with subsequent monitoring left to UNOWAS reports.

Recognising the fragile post-crisis situation, The Gambia's then-UN Permanent Representative, Mamadou Tangara (now Foreign Minister), proactively sought the support of the PBC to assist the new government. This request marked the beginning of a sustained and flexible engagement by the PBC, which has since played a pivotal role in mobilising political, financial, and institutional support for The Gambia's peacebuilding efforts.

An early visit by then Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and an interagency assessment led by the then-Department of Political Affairs and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) paved the way for PBF support and the PBC's swift response in early 2017. The PBC met soon after a follow-up visit by PBC Chair Ambassador Cho Tae-yul (now Foreign Minister of Republic of Korea), Tangara, and representatives of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), PBSO, and UNDP, and quickly aligned its focus on the peacebuilding priorities identified by the new authorities in The Gambia – particularly security sector reform and transitional justice. This rapid and well-coordinated approach provided a model for future PBC engagements in fragile contexts.

The Gambia's experience underscores the strong interdependence between peacebuilding and development. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) was among the first responders, supporting the implementation of 16 projects with a total investment of USD \$30.9 million between 2017 and 2022.<sup>60</sup> Additionally,

cooperation with IFIs significantly strengthened peacebuilding efforts. Ambassador Cho facilitated direct engagement between PBC ambassadors and World Bank leadership, including then-President Jim Yong Kim, which contributed to a more structured approach to international support. A 2017 PBC annual session on The Gambia, attended by high-level representatives from the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and UNDP, further aligned peacebuilding support with The Gambia's national development priorities. These efforts helped draw international attention and mobilise resources ahead of the donor conference in Brussels, co-hosted by The Gambia and the EU, which resulted in over USD \$1.7 billion in financial pledges.<sup>61</sup>

Following the Council's disengagement, the PBC maintained a consistent focus, holding at least one meeting annually to assess progress and adapt its support on key reforms, including constitutional reform, transitional justice, security sector reform, and the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission. The Gambia's case illustrates how continued, structured engagement by the PBC can contribute positively to stability and institutional development.

The Gambia's experience also demonstrates that the PBC's effectiveness should not be measured solely by the written advice it provides to the Security Council, but rather by the complementarity and added value of its engagement. By investing time and effort into substantive, impact-oriented engagement, the PBC ensured that its contributions shaped peacebuilding efforts in tangible ways. PBC's complementary efforts to maintain international attention on The Gambia demonstrated that effective peacebuilding is driven by strategic action and coordination.

## Bridging and Advisory Role to the General Assembly and ECOSOC

Many UN members share the view that, given current geopolitical uncertainties, the PBC should further explore its advisory role to the General Assembly and its bridging role with ECOSOC. In contrast with the much earlier designation of an informal coordinator between the Council and the PBC, the PBC only designated an informal coordinator to liaise with the General Assembly in 2021, during its 15th session<sup>62</sup> and an informal coordinator to liaise with ECOSOC in 2022, during its sixteenth session.<sup>63</sup> The expectation was that these coordinators would build on past initiatives, such as the joint ECOSOC-PBC meetings on the Sahel, to institutionalise the relationship and enhance synergies. However, the PBC remains primarily Council-oriented in its advisory role. In 2024, there were three PBC submissions to the General Assembly and one to

ECOSOC, compared to 11 to the Council. In this respect, the PBC has yet to fully respond to the AGE's call for its members to prioritise representation and accountability to the intergovernmental organs that elect or designate them.

In view of the General Assembly's actions in times of Security Council deadlock, the potential for joint initiatives with the PBC is increasingly recognised as a means to significantly strengthen the UN's capacity for effective and sustainable peacebuilding. The General Assembly could put its weight behind UN peacebuilding work, as it did when it established the PBC and when it helped implement a major recommendation from the 2020 PBAR—securing sustained financing for peacebuilding. Given this track record, many UN member states advocate for strengthened collaboration between the PBC and the General Assembly.

## National Prevention Strategies

In recognition of the Commission's complementary, bridging, and advisory role, the New Agenda for Peace and the Pact for the Future make recommendations for the PBC to play a greater role in support of national prevention strategies.<sup>64</sup> Most countries that engage with the PBC already possess elements of such strategies, whether through prevention of violent extremism, crime prevention strategies or national development plans. To promote greater understanding of the different types of prevention

strategies, the PBC organised a meeting on 22 March 2024, at which Kenya, Norway and Timor-Leste presented their respective strategies.<sup>65</sup> Kenya highlighted its activities to strengthen electoral institutions in response to election-related violence in the 1990s and 2000s. Norway focused on its approach to preventing violent extremism. Timor-Leste described its efforts to address root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, political exclusion, and its focus on strengthening democratic

60 The Gambia Independent Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Portfolio Evaluation Report 2017-2022, (19 January 2024), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf\\_portfolio\\_evaluation\\_2023\\_-\\_final\\_report\\_integrated\\_31jan2024.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_portfolio_evaluation_2023_-_final_report_integrated_31jan2024.pdf)>.

61 Sanna Camara, 'Gambia Gets \$1.7 Billion in Funding Pledges to Reform Economy', Bloomberg, (22 May 2018), <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-05-22/gambia-gets-1-7-billion-in-funding-pledges-to-reform-economy>>.

62 Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its fifteenth session (3 February 2022) (A/76/678-S/2022/89).

63 Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its sixteenth session (17 February 2023) (A/77/720-S/2023/86).

64 Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace, (July 2023), <<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>>; Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, (September 2024), <[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-pact\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_adopted.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf)>.

65 Chair Summary of the Peacebuilding Commission's Ambassadorial-level Meeting on National Efforts for Prevention and Peacebuilding: Lessons Learnt from Kenya, Norway and Timor-Leste (22 March 2024), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/chairs\\_summary\\_-\\_pbc\\_ambassadorial-level\\_meeting\\_on\\_national\\_efforts\\_for\\_prevention\\_and\\_peacebuilding\\_in\\_kenya\\_norway\\_and\\_timor-leste\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/chairs_summary_-_pbc_ambassadorial-level_meeting_on_national_efforts_for_prevention_and_peacebuilding_in_kenya_norway_and_timor-leste_-_final.pdf)>.

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# Evolution and Challenges since the 10-year PBAR

institutions and promoting inclusion, including by implementing the country's 1999 peace agreement.

Ultimately, building on its past experience and in line with its core principle

of national ownership, the PBC can recognise and support any nationally led peacebuilding or prevention initiative shaped by the priorities and contexts of the countries that develop them.

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The momentum around national prevention strategies presents an opportunity for the PBC to deepen its institutional ties not just with the Council but also with the General Assembly and ECOSOC. The PBC's working methods also encourage its members selected from TCCs and financial contributors to reinforce the synergies of those constituencies with the Commission. Mobilising all relevant stakeholders in support of national peacebuilding priorities or national prevention strategies can help ensure that these efforts are not only nationally owned but also strategically coordinated and sustainably financed.

## Focusing on Root Causes of Conflict

Prioritising the root causes of conflict remains one of the most critical yet complex challenges in peacebuilding. Addressing these requires a comprehensive, multidimensional approach that integrates risk, fragility, and resilience analyses, recognising the inextricable link between development and conflict prevention. The PBC has taken steps to engage more systematically with the development system in support of such multidimensional approaches, including by inviting resident coordinators and representatives of agencies, funds, and programmes, as well as IFIs, more frequently to its meetings, fostering discussions on aligning development efforts with peacebuilding priorities. It has also attempted to promote the integration of

peacebuilding priorities into development planning by requesting updates from DPPA/PBSO on financial flows to and peacebuilding investments in conflict-affected countries under its consideration. However, these efforts remain limited and could be strengthened through more systematic follow-up and engagement.

In an attempt to dive deeper in support of the root causes of conflict, the PBC has also begun to recognise education as a critical peacebuilding tool, acknowledging in expert-level discussions that education systems can either fuel conflict—through exclusion and inequality—or contribute to lasting peace by fostering social cohesion.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, there have been suggestions to explore the role of mental health and psychological resilience in post-conflict recovery, recognising that unaddressed trauma and collective grievances can perpetuate cycles of violence. However, countries who engage with the PBC have expressed a preference for such explorations to remain firmly rooted in local ownership and responsive to country-driven priorities.

While the PBC has expanded its scope and influence since the 10-year PBAR, challenges remain in ensuring coordination and impact. The 2025 PBAR presents an opportunity to refine its role, address gaps, and enhance its effectiveness in an evolving global landscape.

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## 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

At the end of January 2025, member states began the formal phase of the PBAR, a process undertaken every five years to strengthen and refine UN peacebuilding efforts worldwide.

### The 2025 PBAR in Context

Called for in resolutions 75/201 and 2558 (2020), this is the fourth review since the General Assembly and the Security Council established the three components of the peacebuilding architecture in 2005.<sup>67</sup> The last review, in 2020, was widely regarded as a rollover exercise, reinforcing the principles and priorities of 2015, while addressing emerging challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising the need to involve the entire UN system in effective strategic planning, and reiterating the need for sustained financing and strengthened partnerships (A/RES/75/201, S/RES/2558).<sup>68</sup> The fourth review comes at a time of significant geopolitical divisions and

escalating risk of conflict in many parts of the world, underscoring the urgent need to act on recommendations from current and past reviews. Among member states, there is a growing consensus that this review should prioritise advancing implementation over reiterating priorities.

According to the terms of reference that the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council circulated to all member states on 16 April 2024, the informal phase in 2024 would gather inputs through consultations and assessments, while the formal phase in 2025 would focus on intergovernmental negotiations to generate recommendations for adoption by the General Assembly and the Security Council by the end of the year.<sup>69</sup>

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66 PBC Expert-level meeting on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture on-Youth, Education and Peacebuilding (17 July 2024), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc\\_eln\\_on\\_pbar-youth\\_education\\_and\\_peacebuilding\\_summary-23072024.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc_eln_on_pbar-youth_education_and_peacebuilding_summary-23072024.pdf)>; PBC Ambassadorial-level Meeting on Education's role in building peace in Nepal and Sierra Leone (14 September 2023), [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/230914\\_chair\\_summary\\_of\\_the\\_pbc\\_meeting\\_on\\_educations\\_role\\_in\\_building\\_peace\\_in\\_nepal\\_and\\_sierra\\_leone.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/230914_chair_summary_of_the_pbc_meeting_on_educations_role_in_building_peace_in_nepal_and_sierra_leone.pdf).

67 General Assembly Resolution (21 December 2020) (A/RES/75/201); Resolution 2558 (21 December 2020) (S/RES/2558).

68 Ibid.

69 2025 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture | Proposal for Suggested Terms of Reference (2024), <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2025\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_peacebuilding\\_architecture\\_-\\_tors\\_-\\_approved.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2025_review_of_the_peacebuilding_architecture_-_tors_-_approved.pdf)>.

# 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

## 2024 Informal Phase Highlights

The informal phase consisted of three tracks: (a) PBC meetings to assess progress; (b) reflections from independent eminent persons whom the Secretary-General selected based on current or past membership to relevant senior advisory boards and groups; and (c) perspectives gathered during thematic and regional consultations organised by member states, regional organisations, think tanks, and civil society across various regions.<sup>70</sup>

In its letter to the General Assembly and the Security Council summarising the outcome of its meetings, the PBC highlighted the importance of national ownership, inclusive participation of women and youth, partnerships with financial institutions, leveraging regional cooperation, and enhancing coherence across UN bodies.<sup>71</sup> The role of youth and education in peacebuilding was highlighted as an undervalued area requiring greater attention. It was recognised as both a fundamental right and a vital tool for conflict prevention and rebuilding trust. Drawing lessons from its flexible support for peacebuilding in The Gambia, the PBC identified the importance of respecting national needs, building institutional capacities, and ensuring adequate financial resources as key to its successful engagement and proposed that they should serve as the foundation for strengthening the architecture.

In their letter to the Secretary-General, which he subsequently shared with the General Assembly and the Security Council, the eminent persons pointed to implementation gaps in past recommendations and urged the review to prioritise actionable steps, including scaling sustainable financing, deepening inclusive participation, and strengthening the PBC as a global platform for prevention and impact.<sup>72</sup>

The thematic and regional consultations offered diverse and valuable perspectives to strengthen peacebuilding efforts and tackle critical global challenges, including forced displacement, urbanisation, and the climate-conflict nexus.<sup>73</sup> These consultations emphasised the importance of human rights, good governance, and sustainable financing as foundational pillars for peace while calling for specific actions such as empowering youth and women in leadership roles, implementing security sector reforms, integrating humanitarian and peacebuilding approaches to address displacement, and safeguarding civic space to enable inclusive participation. They also underscored the need to advance global technological governance, both to counter misinformation and hate speech and harness technology's potential for societal transformation.

These consultations have added to an already substantial volume of recommendations accumulated over successive reviews. This growing repository of inputs—ranging from insightful, actionable proposals to broader, more conceptual ideas—has made prioritisation a significant challenge. The Center on International

Cooperation at New York University organised input to the 2020 PBAR into a matrix, helping to categorise and highlight actionable priorities.<sup>74</sup> No such systematic methodology was applied for the 2025 PBAR, leaving the new influx of recommendations harder to process and integrate effectively.

The Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace drew on input from the three tracks of the informal phase.<sup>75</sup> While the methodology of distilling from the inputs is not explicitly outlined, his report remains a practical starting point. Among the key recommendations:

- Urging member states to embrace nationally owned prevention and peacebuilding strategies as a universal priority. These should be anchored in human rights and backed by the UN system.
- Emphasising the critical role of women in peacebuilding, calling for at least 15% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to conflict-affected countries to advance gender equality, with 1% allocated specifically to women's organisations.
- Pressing member states to reinvigorate voluntary funding to UN entities working on peacebuilding and sustainable development goals, including ensuring adequate resources for resident coordinators' offices and sustained funding during post-mission transitions.
- Highlighting the need for adequate resources for the PBC, commensurate with the expansion of its scope and geographical focus, including the establishment of a dedicated conference facility.
- Urging broader voluntary contributions to the PBF and raising assessed funding to \$100 million per year as requested in his report (A/72/707-S/2018/43), as well as reallocating unspent peacekeeping funds to the PBF.<sup>76</sup>
- Calling for the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Impact Hub to improve access to and use of disaggregated data, fostering greater accountability across the UN system in achieving effective implementation and measurable results.<sup>77</sup>

## The Formal Phase

For the formal stage of the review, two co-facilitators—Egypt for the General Assembly and Slovenia for the Security Council—have been appointed to conduct intergovernmental consultations. These consultations aim to produce agreed recommendations for consideration and decision by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Member states are expected to begin negotiating the text of the twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions in April 2025, with adoption planned between October and December 2025. To kick-start its engagement in this phase, the Security Council, at Algeria's initiative, adopted a presidential statement on 27 January 2025, reaffirming its commitment to the process.<sup>78</sup>

70 UN Peacebuilding Support Office, 'The Independent Eminent Persons for the 2025 Review', <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/independent\\_important\\_persons](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/independent_important_persons)>.

71 Letter dated 13 November 2024 from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, (A/79/609-S/2024/827).

72 Letter dated 21 November 2024 from the group of independent eminent persons selected for the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture addressed to the Secretary-General (A/79/634-S/2024/869), 2.

73 UN Peacebuilding Support Office, 'Thematic and Regional Consultations', <<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/thematic-and-regional-papers>>.

74 Peacebuilding Architecture Review: Matrix of Recommendations, NYU Center in International Cooperation, <<https://cic.nyu.edu/data/peacebuilding-architecture-review-matrix-of-recommendations/>>.

75 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, (25 November 2024) (A/79/552-S/2024/767).

76 Report by the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (18 January 2018) (A/72/707-S/2018/43).

77 UN Peacebuilding Support Office, 'Peacebuilding Impact Hub | A Practice-Oriented Collaborative Effort to Support Innovative and Evidence-Based Peacebuilding', <<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/impact-hub>>.

78 Statement by the President of the Security Council, (27 January 2025) (S/PRST/2025/3).

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## 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

A number of contentious issues are expected to come up during the negotiations, each requiring constructive solutions to ensure progress in peacebuilding efforts.

First, the concept of national ownership remains a point of divergence. Some member states emphasise sovereignty, viewing it as a principle to safeguard against external interference in domestic affairs. Others advocate for national ownership as a means to ensure inclusive and participatory peacebuilding, with greater involvement of women, youth, civil society, and other “agents of change”. Bridging these interpretations requires constructive dialogue, trust-building, and a shared commitment to balancing sovereignty with inclusive, locally driven approaches to peacebuilding.

Second, the role of the PBC in conflict prevention remains contentious, particularly when it involves sensitive issues such as human rights and climate, peace and security. Though the Pact for the Future, adopted in September 2024, draws on the 2016 resolutions that enhanced the PBC’s preventive mandate, debate over its interpretation continues.<sup>79</sup>

A key question closely linked to the PBC’s role in conflict prevention is how prominently human rights considerations should feature in its work. During the Security Council’s open debate on “A New Agenda for Peace—Addressing Global, Regional and National Aspects of Conflict Prevention” under the “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace” agenda item, which took place on 21 August 2024, Mexico, on behalf of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus in New York, co-chaired by Germany and Switzerland, and its other members — Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Gabon, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritius, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay—supported greater consideration of human rights in the work of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, including through appropriate briefings, which they argued is essential for both early action and rapid response mechanisms.<sup>80</sup> During the same meeting, Russia warned against “a selective approach to human rights and freedoms and blatant double standards”, while China emphasised the importance of protecting human rights within the development framework but warned that “other human rights should be upheld in a measured and balanced way”.<sup>81</sup> This debate reflects a longstanding divide that has also extended to the PBC’s attempts to engage with the Human Rights Council. On 7 October 2020, the Human Rights Council invited the Chair of the PBC, starting in 2021, to provide annual briefings during its regular sessions,

covering the PBC’s work, including its relevance to country situations on the Human Rights Council’s agenda.<sup>82</sup> However, as the PBC operates by consensus, it has so far been unable to respond positively to this invitation.

The PBC’s role in addressing climate, peace, and security risks as part of its preventive efforts remains controversial. Mirroring Security Council dynamics, PBC members such as Brazil, China, India and Russia have yet to acknowledge a direct link between climate change and security in PBC meetings and have at times opposed the PBC advising the Council on an issue they believe falls under the mandate of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. However, it is worth noting that on both human rights and climate, peace and security issues, the PBC has reached a consensus on numerous outcome documents reflecting priorities raised by concerned countries. These include references to climate, peace and security concerns in the Sahel and Pacific Islands, as well as human rights considerations in The Gambia, among others.

Third, financing for peacebuilding remains a pressing concern. While some advocate for increasing both assessed and voluntary contributions to the PBF, others, notably the US, the largest provider of assessed contributions, oppose further increases. Although there is broad consensus among UN members on the need to boost voluntary contributions to the PBF, this remains a significant challenge. During the annual session of the PBC on 30 January 2025, the Secretary-General, while welcoming the General Assembly’s approval of assessed contributions, called it “a far cry from the quantum leap of USD \$500 million per year that is needed”.<sup>83</sup> Beyond the PBF, the Secretary-General’s report serves as a call to commit more resources to both UN and non-UN peacebuilding efforts, framing peacebuilding not as a cost but as a necessary investment for global stability and development. During the PBAR negotiations, member states must reconcile differing views on burden-sharing and prioritisation of peacebuilding within increasingly constrained budgets.

Fourth, ensuring that agreed priorities translate into meaningful impact remains a critical yet challenging task. The vast array of recommendations from current and past reviews makes tracking progress on implementation complex and resource intensive. Consolidating and assessing progress across diverse inputs requires dedicated capacity, which can be a constraint. To make implementation a central focus of PBAR discussions, member states can support efforts to systematically map and organise this information within a structured framework of agreed priorities to help measure progress over time.

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79 Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, (September 2024), <[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-pact\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_adopted.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf)>.

80 Security Council Meeting Record (21 August 2024) (S/PV.9710 (Resumption 1)).

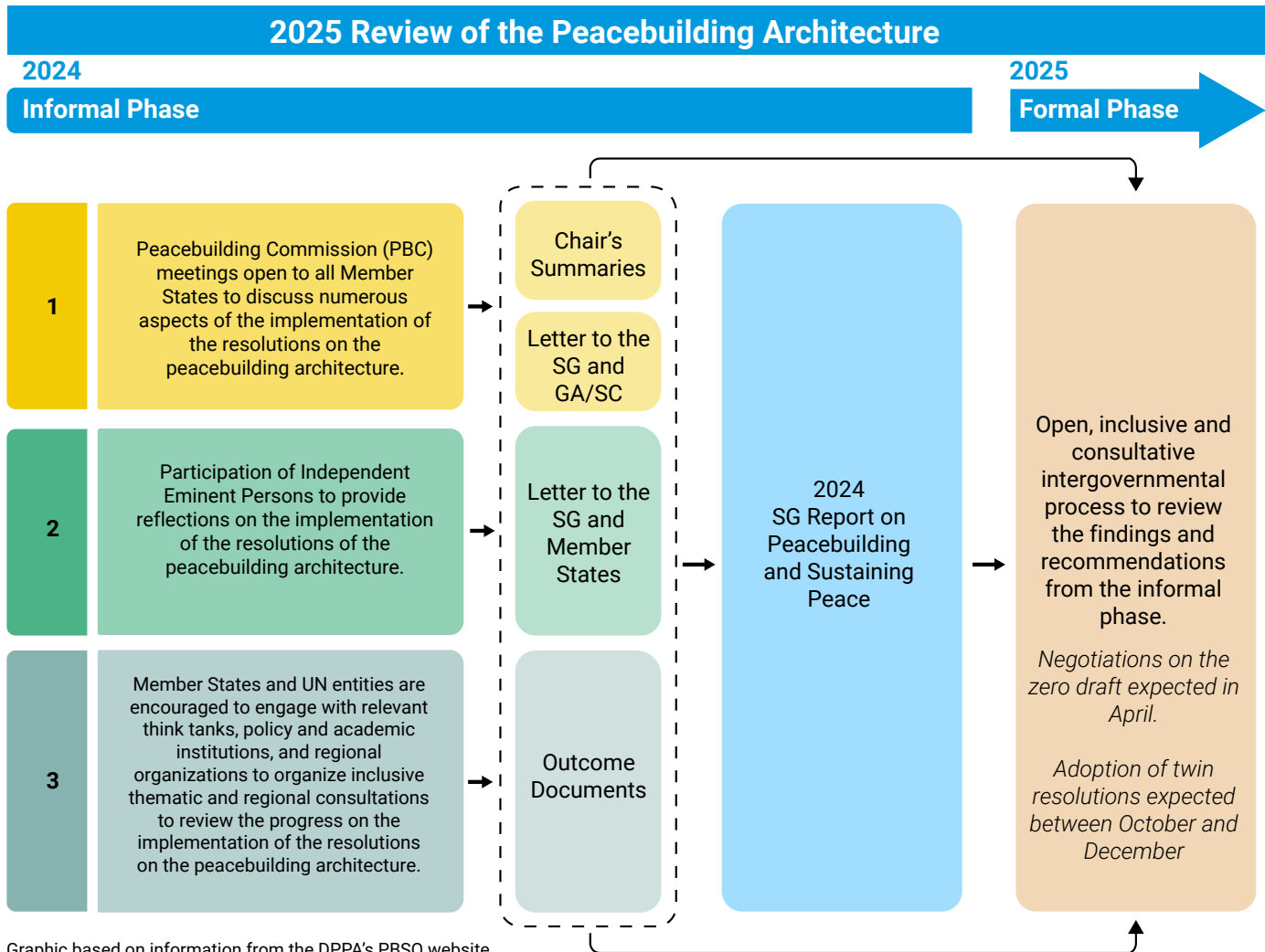
81 Security Council Meeting Record (21 August 2024) (S/PV.9710).

82 Human Rights Council Resolution 45/31 (7 October 2020) (A/HRC/RES/45/31).

83 Remarks by the Secretary-General to the Ambassadorial-Level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission (30 January 2025), <<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2025-01-30/secretary-generals-remarks-the-ambassadorial-level-meeting-of-the-peacebuilding-commission-delivered>>.



# 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review



## Recommendations for an Effective PBC

### For all PBC members

To strengthen the complementary, advisory, and bridging role of the PBC with a focus on implementation and impact, PBC members and Security Council members in the PBC must work collectively to enhance coordination and effectiveness. Below are some recommendations to help achieve that:

- **Institutional Continuity:** The annual rotation of the PBC Chair creates challenges in maintaining continuity, particularly in much needed early-year consultations with countries who consider engaging with the PBC. To mitigate disruptions, the PBC could consider implementing a structured handover period where the outgoing and incoming chairs engage in joint consultations. The familiarisation with country situations relevant to the PBC's work should begin as early as possible, and no later than the campaign period. During this time, candidates for the chairmanship

should consider strategic pathways for the PBC's effective support in these contexts. Beyond the chairmanship, strengthening institutional continuity requires broader preparation for incoming PBC members. A structured onboarding process, modelled on the preparation of elected Security Council members (E10), could be established. E-10 candidates often begin capacity building 2–3 years in advance of Council membership through programmes in New York, engagements in their capitals, and secondments to missions of countries from their regional groups. A similar approach for PBC candidates—incorporating tailored training, mentorship, and early engagement—would ensure they are well-equipped to contribute effectively from day one. This would enhance institutional memory, minimise disruptions, and improve the Commission's overall impact.



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## Recommendations for an Effective PBC

- **Strategic informal coordinator role:** There is room for the informal PBC coordinators for the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the Security Council to move beyond identifying opportunities for briefings and focus more on fostering synergetic action across these bodies, emulating initiatives such as General Assembly-PBC collaboration on financing for peacebuilding, ECOSOC-PBC joint action on the Sahel, and Security Council-PBC coordination on The Gambia, Liberia, and other critical peacebuilding priorities. The three informal coordinators can identify synergetic actions across UN bodies and pillars in support of regional UN peacebuilding approaches—such as those in the Great Lakes, Sahel, and Lake Chad Basin—as well as national peacebuilding efforts that the Security Council either does not sufficiently cover or does not address at all.

### Recommendations for Security Council members

- The PBC-Security Council coordinator, in close collaboration with the P5 and elected Council members serving on the PBC, can proactively explore and help pave the way for complementary PBC action in support of UN transitions. When the Security Council decides to draw down a peace operation and asks the UN to prepare a transition plan, the PBC-Security Council informal coordinator could engage with the host country as well as the PBC to review, identify, and raise awareness of resource gaps and long-term peacebuilding needs. Some PBC members have mentioned the need to include such a task in a Security Council resolution. However, experience shows that this could risk deterring countries that prefer a voluntary, flexible approach to PBC support—precisely the concern raised by those who previously rejected PBC involvement in UN transition settings. Instead, the informal PBC-Security Council coordinator, in coordination with the PBC Chair, can liaise with the host country as it prepares to enter a UN transition setting to ensure, through dialogue and consultation, that PBC involvement is based on national ownership and trust, reinforcing its role as a valuable peacebuilding partner.
- In addition to UN transition contexts and in support of the PBC’s impact-oriented approach, the Council may request the PBC to

provide periodic outcome briefs or reports assessing its activities and results in countries and regions under both the PBC’s consideration and the Council’s purview. By combining quantitative performance metrics with qualitative stakeholder feedback, these updates would offer complementary insights, helping to inform and guide the Council’s work as appropriate.

- The permanent membership of the P5 in both the PBC and the Security Council presents a valuable opportunity to ensure that peacebuilding remains a central priority within broader peace and security initiatives. While their presence has helped prevent misalignment with the Council’s agenda, primarily through their active role during negotiations of consensual PBC documents, there remains significant potential for the P5 to enhance their engagement. By working more closely with the informal PBC-Security Council coordinator and the elected Security Council members serving on the PBC, they can play a more proactive role in supporting, guiding, and coordinating an annual PBC work programme that is both substantive and complementary to the Council’s priorities. Strengthening this collaboration would not only reinforce the PBC’s impact but also ensure that it is able to provide more in-depth advice to the Council.

### Recommendation for UN members and the UN Secretariat

- **Enhancing the PBC’s Capacity:** While the flexibility and adaptability of the PBC are a strength, it is equally important to ensure that PBC engagements remain consistent and lead to meaningful outcomes. To help achieve that, DPPA/PBSO must be adequately resourced to support an increasingly demanding workload. Equally crucial is securing sufficient access to conference facilities to enable regular and effective meetings. For some countries under its consideration, the PBC has struggled to plan more than one meeting per year, making it difficult to systematically follow up on commitments made by PBC members and multilateral partners. More frequent and well-supported meetings and visits would increase the likelihood of mobilising PBC members to notify their capitals and relevant embassies about key outcomes and necessary follow-up actions.

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## Conclusion

Twenty years on, the Peacebuilding Commission stands at a defining moment. The 2025 PBAR is an opportunity not just to reflect, but to act with greater purpose. The world is changing, and so must its approach to sustaining peace. The rising tide of conflict and instability demands more than statements of intent; it requires bold commitments, predictable financing, and partnerships that extend beyond crises. Peace must be a universal priority, one that should be built, nurtured, and protected through sustained effort and collective will. To be effective, the PBC must deepen its investment in prevention as much as recovery, ensuring that the promise of peacebuilding translates into lasting impact.

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