

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace in an era of geopolitical transition: The role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

Submission by the Center on International Cooperation, New York University

A normative role for the PBC

From a normative perspective, the PBC can help normalize the prevention agenda by demonstrating to Member States how in fact prevention is a universal concern. It can help articulate the concrete benefits prevention can provide to all countries, including those not considered to be in situations of fragility and conflict. The presentations by Canada, Colombia, and Norway of their own experiences during the June 2023 meeting on indigenous peoples, peace, and reconciliation were a powerful model of how this could be approached. The PBC can identify opportunities to become a trusted space for countries to **gain expertise** on effective violence prevention strategies, including through exchanges on good practices and lessons learned. Lessons can be drawn from the *PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned* to facilitate relevant exchanges among member states. The PBC could also develop a strategy, similar to its [gender strategy](#), to support countries in [developing evidence-based national action plans](#). The PBC can also raise the importance of prevention internationally and build trust between different parties in countries to foster political and social commitment for prevention in national audiences. The PBC can also [sound the alarm when they see that risk factors for violence may increase](#) due to external shocks, such as the COVID-19 crisis or the Russian invasion of Ukraine. PBSO and member states require a better understanding of risk factors for violence, to be able to identify them when they rise.

An operational role for the PBC

While national prevention strategies are a question of universal relevance, some countries might need more accompaniment from the UN system in the implementation of these strategies. In such cases, the PBC should serve as a platform to coordinate **effective support to and funding of these strategies**.

The 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review also highlighted the potential role of the PBC during the drawdown and withdrawal of United Nations peace operations [in mapping the capacity of United Nations country teams against peacebuilding priorities](#). In this regard, the PBC can highlight the gaps that the United Nations system may need to fill, in terms of necessary capacities to support countries after the departure of a peace operation, including in the development and implementation of national prevention strategies. These capacities should be tailored to specific contexts and can take the form of expanded country teams or light footprint missions.

Continuous improvement and strengthening

A feedback mechanism should be in place to constantly assess the work of the PBC. In the interim, the PBC should conduct an **evaluation** of its work in prevention across the areas of (1) political accompaniment, (2) funding, and (3) coordination; this would not only be valuable to improve its own work, but would also help provide a strong basis for designing relevant reforms in the context of the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review.