



The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund


Papua New Guinea



United Nations
Peacebuilding

MAY 2020

PBF Investments in

TOTAL
APPROVED  **\$16.6 M**

CURRENT
PORTFOLIO  **\$5.5 M**

Focusing on

-  Women's empowerment
-  Youth political engagement
-  Peaceful management of conflicts
-  Dialogue
-  Awareness raising

Partners



PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

Papua New Guinea is a large country in the South Pacific, which is unique in its cultural and ethnic diversity. In 2001, following a decade-long conflict, the national Government and the leaders representing the people of Bougainville (one of the islands in Papua New Guinea) signed the Bougainville Peace Agreement. The referendum on the political status of Bougainville was a vital pillar of the Agreement and was credibly and peacefully concluded in December 2019 with 85% turnout and an overwhelming 97.7% of votes in support of independence. Bougainville has now entered the post-referendum process in an environment where complex challenges remain and may pose further risks to sustaining peace.

A very different dynamic of violence has been long present in the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea, in the middle zone of the main island. Yet the trajectory of traditional tribal warfare in this region has changed drastically in scale, intensity and type of violence over the past two decades, especially with the presence of modern weapons, political competition, and new challenges of distribution of royalties from natural resources. These active conflicts negatively affect the realisation of human rights, social and structural stability, and sustainable development in the region.

PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

The PBF's investment in PNG (\$16.6 million since 2015), implemented through the UN Country Team, has primarily focused on supporting an enabling environment for the referendum on the political status of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, which took place at the end of 2019. This support has been provided in close partnership and complementarity with other support from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, including Mediation Support Unit, Asia-Pacific Division and Electoral Assistance Division, and has enabled a continued strong role of the UN in the Bougainville peace process.



In addition, in late 2018, the PBF approved the first project of support in PNG outside of Bougainville, targeting the conflict-ridden Southern Highlands and Hela provinces with a view to starting to tackle tribal conflict and community grievances and to strengthen the peace-humanitarian and development nexus.

The current PBF projects end in 2020. The Government and the UN Resident Coordinator have expressed interest in continued PBF support in both Bougainville and in the Highlands region.

During the period of PBF's strategic plan 2017-2019 an additional \$11,929,145 were mobilized in Papua New Guinea, representing \$1.59 per dollar invested by the PBF.

■ PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT

Papua New Guinea was the first non-PBC Country Configuration Member State which addressed the Commission to discuss its peacebuilding priorities and challenges in 2015, following the declaration of eligibility to PBF support. In October 2019, the Government addressed the Commission again to discuss the preparations for the Bougainville referendum and the peacebuilding planning for the Highlands region.

■ PEACEBUILDING FUND IMPACT

1 Enabling a Peaceful Referendum in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville: the PBF support to the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement since 2015 strengthened the trust and relationship between the Papua New Guinea national government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to jointly work towards the referendum on the future political status of Bougainville. Through its risk-tolerant support, the PBF facilitated, together with other parts of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and with the Bougainville Referendum Commission, and through the UN Country Team, the creation of an enabling environment for a peaceful referendum.

In particular, the PBF facilitated the political dialogue between the two Governments on issues related to the Peace Agreement and the referendum, raised awareness on the Agreement through mass awareness campaigns throughout Bougainville, and assisted with community weapons disposal and reintegration. The PBF also enabled the resolution of a major area of long-standing dispute between the two Governments, helping to find a compromise formula for the calculation of the Restoration Development Grant paid annually by the national Government to Bougainville. The Fund also assisted in the signing of the parliamentary partnership agreement between the National Parliament and the Bougainville House of Representatives, pledging to increase collaboration.

Moreover, the PBF support has been enhancing the role of women and youth in the referendum preparation and conduct, including through targeted information campaigns and fora for dialogue on key peacebuilding issues, within communities and with political leaders. The Fund also supported reconciliation and dialogue between the National Council of Women and the Bougainville Women's Federation as well as the inclusion of two women in the post-referendum Task Force.

2 Empowering Women and Youth as Peacebuilders in the Highlands Region: the PBF has supported the capacity building of selected women, youth and community leaders in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the Southern Highlands and Hela provinces. The Fund is helping to establish the Highlands Centre for Peace and Reconciliation to provide a safe, neutral and peaceful space for all ethnicities for dialogue and coordination of peace initiatives. The PBF is also supporting inclusive development of Community Peace Plans in the target communities to foster a culture of dialogue and joint action for peace.

■ ABOUT THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The Fund may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations.

The Fund works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to peacebuilding opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.