

Meeting the Moment: The Future of Peace and Security

Goal

The *Future of Peace and Security Project* will support and unite a coalition of peacebuilding experts and organizations to develop an innovative, evidence-based strategic vision and practical plan to more effectively prevent violent conflict and build sustainable peace in the face of increasing conflict and challenging political realities worldwide.

Overview

Globally, violent conflict continues to rise with devastating consequences. Violent conflict and violence are expensive, costing the global economy [\\$19.97 trillion](#), approximately 11.6 percent of the gross world product. Conflicts [contribute to 80 percent of all humanitarian needs](#), and remain the primary driver of terrorism, with [over 95 percent of deaths from terrorism](#) occurring in countries already in conflict, as well as displacement, with more than [122.1 million forcibly displaced people](#) as of the end of April 2025.

While military spending is increasing, resources for peace and conflict prevention are at the [second-lowest level](#) since 2004. In the U.S., the Trump Administration has carried out [sweeping cancellations](#) of foreign assistance grants and contracts, dismantled USAID, and is significantly [reorganizing the State Department](#), including closing key conflict prevention offices and terminating experienced conflict experts. While the U.S. has dramatically cut foreign aid, other major donors have followed suit, including [Germany](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and the [Netherlands](#). Multilateral organizations and norms are fraying in an [increasingly multipolar world](#), and amidst funding cuts, while civil society is [facing unprecedented threats](#).

In the U.S. and globally, civil society is already working to protect core peacebuilding-related policies, laws, and resources wherever possible, including efforts to advance the implementation of the Global Fragility Act, the Women, Peace, and Security Act, and the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. International non-governmental organizations and local peacebuilders are collaborating to address violent conflicts in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, and beyond, while seeking to avert further violence in places like Syria, Burma, Colombia, and others. These efforts are critical and will continue.

At the same time, we cannot, and should not, seek a revival of the status quo or return to “business as usual.” There is no going back amid a fast-changing, more turbulent global landscape and widening public distrust in institutions. Today’s violent conflicts are much more complex and protracted, and traditional development assistance and diplomacy approaches have not kept pace. Previous systems that relied so heavily on U.S. funding and engagement were limited and not meeting the moment. This moment provides an opportunity to transform existing systems to more effectively address one of the greatest challenges of our time, record-breaking and increasing global violent conflict and violence.

To meet this moment, the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) and a steering group of leading U.S.-based peacebuilding civil groups, research organizations, and foundations are establishing a collaborative process to rethink, reorient, and reenergize how we collectively build support for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Through a series of strategic roundtables, workstream meetings, and informal discussions, AfP will convene leading experts and diverse stakeholders to generate a future-facing vision to promote peace and security, identify opportunities for collective action, and undertake extensive outreach to garner additional partners and support for peacebuilding.

The Future of Peace and Security Project and Coalition will ultimately advance a bold new plan to rally support for the peace and security sector and innovative approaches to preventing, reducing,

and resolving violent conflict, as well as promoting systems that better support local peacebuilders and those closest to conflicts. This Coalition will be focused on driving future action among the peacebuilding community based in the U.S., but will include intentional and coordinated engagement and dialogue with partners around the world, including multilateral institutions, governments, civil society, academia, local peacebuilders, and the private sector. The Coalition will develop iterative recommendations and concrete actions to consolidate and elevate the substantial knowledge and tools of the peacebuilding field, while adapting such to meet evolving global challenges and better support conflict prevention and resolution at all levels, particularly the local. Simultaneously, the Coalition will consider how to better communicate and advocate for a new vision of peace and security within the U.S. and globally, particularly to different audiences, including by breaking down silos, engaging new communities, and building a wider social movement.

The Coalition will undertake several concurrent key lines of effort, integrating the need for localization and local leadership, ownership, and consultation throughout the vision and output development processes, including:

1. ***Mobilize the Knowledge:*** Conduct a stock-taking of what is effective peacebuilding and inclusive security, what is not working, and what is missing, and consider how to integrate this knowledge into the overall future vision for peace and security, as well as elevate this learning and knowledge to be more standardized, easily referenced, and regularly applied moving forward.
2. ***Make the Case and Build Support:*** Improve messaging, storytelling, and narratives that consistently make the case and build support for peacebuilding across various audiences in the U.S. and beyond (Congress, governments, multilateral institutions, the public, the private sector, philanthropic donors).
 - Define the “why”—why should the American people and other public constituencies care about peacebuilding? Why is addressing peace and conflict important to global and national security? What is the return on investment of funding, supporting, and engaging in peacebuilding?
 - Create shared and tailored messaging/talking points that we can all use to demonstrate clarity and impact of peacebuilding interventions, with a strong focus on why donors, governments, and everyday people should care.
 - Develop and implement a strategy for outreach and socializing the shared messaging to reach broad audiences and build support for the new vision and resources for peace and security.
 - Determine ways to better educate and make the case for increasing peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs, strategies, and policies in the U.S. and globally.
3. ***Widen the Coalition:*** Identify existing and new champions in the U.S. and globally, as well as allies that have the entry points to access and influence policymakers, the public, the private sector, and other key actors.
 - Connect with other aligned movement efforts to garner support for the peacebuilding agenda and identify opportunities for more coordinated action and messaging.
4. ***Refine the Policy Frameworks and Tools:*** Reflect on the successes and failures of existing peacebuilding and conflict prevention laws, policies, and initiatives to garner lessons learned, and determine how they need to be adapted to meet future challenges. Identify innovative and iterative recommendations about future peacebuilding architectures, platforms, networks, and practices based on learning and evidence and outline opportunities to advocate for these approaches and leverage new tools and technologies.
5. ***Advance New Models for Partnership and Resourcing:*** Seek new funding streams and opportunities, including with private sector actors, governments, and non-traditional philanthropic and individual donors, that positions peace as a strategic, measurable outcome, grounded in the conviction that peace is not an abstract ideal, but a foundational investment in long-term

economic stability and societal well-being. Collaborate with existing governmental and philanthropic donors to align messaging in efforts to recruit other governments, donors, and investors, particularly in adjacent sectors, to support peacebuilding. Scope new ways for U.S.-based and international peacebuilding actors to mobilize resources to local peacebuilders around the world working to address conflict challenges, mindful of shifting power dynamics and funding constraints.

The Coalition leads will constitute workstreams to guide each of these lines of effort, including leveraging AfP's existing [working groups](#), and release iterative recommendations and materials over the course of the next year. Dedicated "task teams," comprised of volunteers from the workstreams, will conduct outreach and consultations with a wider array of stakeholders—focused especially on traditionally underrepresented groups—and report back to the larger working group, using a "circulatory" approach.¹ Teams will also leverage planned events for engagement, including the [Peace Connect gathering in October 2025](#) and the next PeaceCon, tentatively scheduled for January 2026.

An overall project steering team, to include representatives from leading organizations, will coordinate efforts across the workstreams and facilitate cross-cutting engagements and outreach. The steering team will organize gatherings throughout the process that bring together stakeholders across the workstreams to review progress and share reflections. The team will help generate and circulate working papers and other materials that summarize emerging insights and iterative recommendations.

Draft Timeline

- Phase 0 (July - August 2025): Prepare for launch; kick-off roundtable of the Coalition; socialize concept note; identify co-leads of
- Phase 1 (September - December 2025): Working groups established; outreach, consultations and preparing drafts
- Midpoint (January 2026): Presentation of initial findings and recommendations; related dialogues and capacity-strengthening workshops at PeaceCon
- Phase 2 (February - April 2026): Further consultations; circulate iterative working papers and recommendations
- Phase 3 (May - June 2026): Consolidation of insights; production of final report(s)/recommendations and materials for stakeholder review
- Phase 4 (July - August 2026): Final report(s) and materials launched and socialized

¹ The idea of a "circulation" approach is drawn from the recent writings of John Paul Lederach, including his recent article in Waging Nonviolence entitled, "[Why Movements Need to Learn to Fly Like Bees and Thread Like Spiders.](#)"