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## Pilfering the peace: The nexus between corruption and peacebuilding



**Seeds of corruption and  
peacebuilding**

**Corruption and change  
in the Caucasus**

**Corruption and violence  
in Burundi**

**Communal corruption  
and peacebuilding in  
Lebanon**

**Grand corruption  
Colombia's  
'parapolitics'**

**Warlords and corruption  
in post-conflict  
governments**

**Can fighting corruption  
harm building peace?**

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## DEAR READERS OF NEW ROUTES 3-4/2009

**WE ARE VERY PLEASED** to present you with this double issue of *New Routes* on an interesting and rather new theme: The nexus between corruption and peacebuilding. Again, as in *New Routes* 3.2008, we are happy to have Cheyanne Church as our guest editor, this time assisted by Kirby Reiling. We thank them for their full-hearted efforts to explore the different aspects of this complicated subject and hope that you will find so-far unknown and maybe unexpected viewpoints.

"Money makes the world go around" and "Money is the root of all evil" are indeed two sides of the same coin. It is an established truth that what can be used can also be misused. Corruption is sometimes the result of poverty, sometimes of greed. And, of course, corruption is not always a matter of money but sometimes of power and influence.

Hopefully this issue will evoke further ideas and questions and inspire you to engage deeper in the subject. You are most welcome to share your thoughts with us!

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PHOTO: LPI



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# Lilies that fester: Seeds of corruption and peacebuilding

Cheyenne Scharbatke-Church and Kirby Reiling

*For sweetest things turn sourest  
by their deeds;  
Lilies that fester smell far worse  
than weeds.*

Shakespeare, *Sonnet 94*

*Very early in post-war Liberia, I was working as co-chairperson of a County Property Rights Working Group. The role of the group was to address land disputes, which were highly contentious and possibly violent due to the number of people displaced in the fighting. The co-chair was the "Land Commissioner", let's call him Sam, with whom I had an excellent working relationship.*

*One of the major problems we were dealing with was provision of "land deeds" by the mayor in exchange for bribes. In my role as co-chair I was contacted by an individual – let's call him John – who had recently returned from exile only to find a person living in a newly built house on the land who also had possession of a deed of ownership from the mayor.*

*In a rare stroke of luck, John had the original "tribal deed" and "title deed" issued to his father well before the war. After a few questions which reassured me of his claim, I told John that I could accompany him to a meeting with the illegal occupier and City Mayor.*

*When I arrived at this meeting, I was pleasantly surprised to see not only John and the Mayor, but also my colleague Sam. As Land Commissioner, he could take the lead, and I could avoid the perception of the UN enforcing the law. I asked John where the illegal occupier was. He pointed to Sam. Needless to say, Sam was not as happy about my presence.*

Jason Hepps, UNHCR Liberia

Contemporary conflicts are complex, and corruption enables, reflects and results from this complexity. War economies are built on corruption as the parties in conflict rely on criminal syndicates, fraud and bribery to grease the wheels of the supply chain for everything from weapons to timber. Many rebel groups would not be able to operate at all, were it not for the international black market. They are not alone. In the post-war environment, even where state institutions remain intact, the 'fog of war' and its aftermath provides cover for private profiteering from those who should be leading the reconstruction effort. Peace agreements can make winners out of the same traffickers and warlords who

used the conflict as a profit-generating event. Conversely, ordinary citizens' lives are made even more difficult when corruption prevents them from participating in the economy, enjoying their basic rights and securing their property and families.


As conflicts are riddled with corruption, peacebuilding<sup>1</sup> work should be appropriately riddled with anti-corruption<sup>2</sup> efforts. This issue of *New Routes*, *Pilfering the peace: The nexus between corruption and peacebuilding*, is intended to contribute to the conversation between these two fields.<sup>3</sup>

## Why corruption should matter to peacebuilders

The *raison d'être* of peacebuilding in a war context is, of course, to achieve a durable solution that stops the violence. Corruption, however, can limit peacebuilding agencies' ability to achieve this end. In many contexts, a conflict analysis shows that corruption – particularly corruption at the highest political levels – is a key driving factor of the conflict. In conflicts where nepotism or patronage

networks exclude vast swathes of the population from decision-making and access to resources, then corruption lies at the heart of society's problems. Furthermore, corrupt networks themselves can reinforce the very divisions along lines of ethnicity, religion or class which feed the conflict cycle. If corruption is not addressed, the chances of that durable solution in the form of a lasting positive peace remain slim.

Corruption can also undermine peacebuilding programmes that are seeking to address key driving factors of the conflict unrelated to corrupt be-

 ***It is fair to say that many consider corruption a problem for the accountants and lawyers.***

haviour. It can distort the incentives of peacebuilding staff and workshop participants, for instance through abuse of per diems, travel payments, scholarships or other benefits. This muddies the water of intent, making it difficult to ascertain where real progress or blockages exist, or where personal gain is driving the agenda.

Such complications have greater consequences than a failed peacebuilding project. When the local population perceives the process, the international community at large or the peacebuilding community in particular to be corrupt or ethically compromised, the overall legitimacy of the peacebuilding process can be undermined. This will reduce the support to the processes and actors seeking resolution.

Peace agreements – the high-profile pinnacles of peacebuilding work – are not immune from illicit abuse. Power-sharing approaches to peace agreements favoured by the international community may effectively institutionalise political corruption by shifting the fight for resources from one character-

ised by violence to one that distorts the trappings of governance structures for the same end. This distortion is generally deemed to be the price one pays for securing a deal, although this framing heavily favours short-term stability over the long-term legitimacy and effectiveness of the state apparatus. *Gaelle Kibranian explores this issue in her article on peace agreements and corruption in Lebanon.*

When these agreements are concluded with warlords, as in Afghanistan or Sierra Leone, then the actors that are

“Around the globe, expatriate complaining has in common an alienated sense of superiority and a hopeless verdict. Whenever I asked about practical matters... [some internationals] would snap back almost impatiently that nothing could be done, that nobody *cared*.”<sup>4</sup> The temptation to ascribe wide-ranging social ills to “the system” and more precisely to some general idea of “corruption” can be strong – and unfortunately all too common.

Corruption as a concept, like so many other social ills, is widely understood yet nebulous when one tries to nail it down operationally. Boucher et al neatly penned the conundrum when they wrote, “Corruption is a phenomenon that seems to have obvious, intrinsic meaning when viewed from a distance but that differentiates increasingly, like an impressionist painting, as one comes closer.”<sup>5</sup> Conceptual confusion about corruption lends itself to foggy thinking and poor programming. Therefore, one of the first steps should be to inquire: What do we mean by the word ‘corruption’? Who is corrupt? How do we know if it is getting better or worse?

Working definitions of corruption have evolved over time. Joseph Nye’s definition, “behaviour that deviates from

the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains”<sup>6</sup> was coined in the sixties and was the dominant work for many years. Today, the most common definition – employed by the anti-corruption leaders Transparency International and the World Bank, among others – goes something like “the abuse of public power for private gain”.<sup>7</sup>

This seemingly simple definition contains a number of important points for consideration. The distinction between the public realm and the private one is central to the definition, but the line may not be so clear when the government is party to a conflict. Likewise, the corrupt “gain” need not be financial. It is not only a status gain, but political power, personal safety assurances and even sexual exploitation can be procured through illicit exchanges, especially in conflict environments.<sup>8</sup> There is a reason that the United Nations Development Programme contracts come with a standard paragraph stating “the contactor shall refrain from... exchanging any money, goods, services, offers of employment or other things of value for sexual favours or activities”.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the gain need not be limited to a personal one; it may apply to a political party, clan or ethnic group.

None of the definitions, however, give full account to the breadth of illicit and

“ **Corruption can provide the glue to hold formerly warring parties together.**

now responsible for building the peace are rarely the ones most qualified for the job, nor those of the highest moral standing. *Phyllis Dininio examines the issue of warlords installed in post-agreement governments and the inherent problems and potential remedies.*

In fact, the international community has been known to use questionable means in order to entice these actors to the table, thus setting the expectation that one should receive a personal dividend for taking action that is beneficial to a wider community.

The rank and file of the paramilitary or rebel groups are not immune from the lure of corruption. Many rely on corruption during peacetime to facilitate lucrative criminal activity. Consider the Kosovo Liberation Army or the Ulster Volunteer Force in Northern Ireland for examples of paramilitary groups transforming themselves into sophisticated criminal networks in a post-agreement context.

Despite the frequent intersection of corruption with conflict and peacebuilding, few peacebuilding agencies have explicitly developed programming aimed at altering the vicious network of corruption and conflict. In fact, it is fair to say that many consider corruption, especially in its less sensational forms, a problem for the accountants and lawyers, just as those lawyers consider conflict and politics to be outside their mandate.

**Unpacking the concept of corruption**

In his memoir, *Tropical Gangsters*, the well-known scholar of corruption and development Robert Klitgaard remarks,

*The usefulness of anti-corruption placards is doubtful as long as there are societies where the average citizen feels that a patronage network or a bribe is more trustworthy than state institutions.*



PHOTO: PER J ANDERSON/SCANPIX

abusive transactions that may be labelled *corrupt*. One study by USAID in Russia<sup>10</sup> found that citizens' uses of the word corruption differed significantly from official definitions, occasionally applying to routine governmental practices such as an increase in the price of electricity. Like Klitgaard's cynical expats, the public at large may be more comfortable ascribing all social problems with the catch-all label of corruption, or it may be that cultures and values really do perceive the world differently. Thus, corruption can be used either very broadly to describe general injustice, or it can be used so narrowly as to only account for the most obvious crimes.

A common categorical distinction is to parse corruption into two types: bureaucratic (or "petty") corruption and political (or "grand") corruption. Bureaucratic corruption refers to the 'low level' abuse and demands for bribes that citizens encounter in the public administration, police, tax authorities and so on.<sup>11</sup> Conversely, political corruption occurs among influential elites who are themselves corrupt and who use their influence to shape laws, institutions and policies in a way to facilitate their own private profiteering.<sup>12</sup> *The article by Daniel Freidman on parapolitics in Colombia illustrates how political corruption fuels conflict while undermining the state's attempt to eliminate criminal networks.*

Corruption is a dirty word, especially in the Western-dominated international community. To be sure, there is a litany of negative consequences from corruption, ranging from a negative impact on

the glue to hold formerly warring parties together. These 'positive' consequences of corruption need to be understood from the perspective of 'short-term' wins. The challenge arises when one takes a longer-term perspective, weighing in issues of democracy, good governance and state legitimacy. Indeed, attempting reform and institutionalising accountability may threaten the post-war structures, which could itself lead to instability.<sup>14</sup> *Michael Johnston's article looks at this conundrum and using his four types of corruption typology argues, maybe surprisingly, that one should not expect to eliminate corruption in societies in transition.*

### Measuring corruption

Corrupt acts occur in secret, and even when an illicit transaction or relationship is exposed, the precise terms of the exchange are rarely entirely clear. For these reasons, tracking or quantifying the scale and scope of corruption is extraordinarily difficult. These difficulties are only magnified when attempting to measure corruption in a conflict or post-conflict context, given that regular state data collection and reporting is often not functioning and that corruption is not limited to fiscal exchanges.

Despite this, there are several international measurement efforts such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index or the Global Integrity Index. The results of the various measures differ in the quality of their reliability, validity and responsiveness – especially in conflict countries.<sup>15</sup> While

this imperfection does not void them of value, peacebuilding professionals should use the results judiciously,

as one set of information carefully calibrated and checked against others.<sup>16</sup> *See the Corruption Resource Page at the end of this volume for more information.*

### It's not just 'those guys'

Bribery, fraud, embezzlement and abuse occur everywhere, among people of all classes and nationalities – including peacebuilders.<sup>17</sup> Although to date there has been no research on corruption in peacebuilding agencies per se, it behoves these institutions to be aware of the possible corruption risks.

Research by the Feinstein International Centre, the Overseas Develop-

ment Institute (ODI) and Transparency International into corruption in humanitarian organisations in 2007-2008 shows that beneficiaries of aid and humanitarian workers have abused entrusted authority for personal gain.<sup>18</sup> Case in point: in June 2009, the BBC exposed a corruption scandal in World Vision's Liberia programme, where 90 per cent of its aid to Liberia went missing.<sup>19</sup> The corrupt patterns that arise in the aid process are so predictable that ODI developed a corruption risk map to be used by humanitarian agencies for gauging the risk associated with common steps in the delivery of aid such as assessments or procurement. Peacebuilders may be wise to reflect on ODI's corruption risk map and its applicability to peacebuilding work in an attempt to proactively address corruption.

International peacekeepers have also been shown to abuse their power for personal gain.<sup>20</sup> In West Africa and DRC peacekeepers have contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict through the selling of weapons. In DRC, those who led the UN disarmament process turned around and sold the weapons on the black market, re-fuelling the war. *Matt Herbert's article provides a more in-depth look at consequences of corruption in militaries.*

### Anti-corruption strategies

Strategies for fighting corruption differ in design and implementation. Some programmes are top-down efforts within a government ministry or international body, others are bottom-up initiatives of civil society. Regardless, anti-corruption efforts tend to fall into three general categories: punishment, prevention or values-based.<sup>21</sup> *Raymond June and Nathaniel Heller from Global Integrity provide an introduction to three typologies of corruption and offer some suggestions for anti-corruption tools applicable to post-conflict contexts.*

The punishment approach, which includes legal prosecution, is perhaps the most obvious form of fighting corruption. The UN Convention against Corruption, which went into force in 2005, has helped change the legal playing field by establishing a set of international norms. Another tactic is the "name-and-shame" approach, similar to that employed by the human rights community. This has been popular among civil society groups, for instance some Transparency International National Chapters.



***In many contexts, a conflict analysis shows that corruption is a key driving factor of the conflict.***

economic development to delegitimising a new post-war government.<sup>13</sup> *See Peter Uvin's article on the impact of corruption in post-war Burundi for an explanation of the negative role of corruption on public perceptions of a new post-agreement government.* However, corruption is not always or strictly a social ill. If one considers a conflict context or state collapse, corruption and especially patronage networks can be a survival technique that it is only rationale for the average person to utilise.

Furthermore, as described earlier, corruption can play an incentivising role in peace agreements and provide



PHOTO: TINA GUE/PHOENIX

Bank notes are scrutinised in search for counterfeit money, which is a common type of corruption. From Managua Bank, Nicaragua.

Prevention strategies, meanwhile, often exist in tandem with punitive legal frameworks. These tactics focus on deterrence, such as regular audits, accounting controls, staff vetting and resources for whistleblowing.

Finally, anti-corruption strategies based on changing values or ethical education aim to (re)instil a sense of accountability and integrity. The UN Office of Drugs and Crime's recent "Your No Counts" campaign would fall into this category.

Yet, as is apparent on the front pages of newspapers, the anti-corruption field does not have all the answers or full-proof approaches. Strategies based on prosecution often end up attacking bureaucratic corruption among rank-and-file government officials without stamping out the high-level grand corruption that governs the system overall. As such the civil servant is punished while the warlord in a senior government position continues without consequence. In post-conflict countries struggling from weak institutions and poor rule of law, a punishment-based approach may turn out to be both unproductive and infeasible. This environment poses similar constraints on typical prevention strategies.

Values- and ethics-based options certainly have a key place in a holistic anti-corruption strategy. However, there are still many outstanding questions as to how they can be most effective. Consider public information campaigns which seek to raise awareness about the negative consequences of corruption. One suspects corruption, in many contexts, occurs not merely for lack of anyone knowing any better. The worst criminals, politicians and warlords know what they are doing is wrong (and don't care). Meanwhile, the average citizen living without security, state services or rule of law may justifiably place more faith in a patronage network or bribe than in state institutions. In which case, are billboards with a "Say No to Corruption" logo likely to change the situation in a post-conflict society?

Regardless of the anti-corruption approach taken, one also has to be cautious that the fight against corruption is not hijacked by the same political narratives of the war. Accusations of corruption are a familiar refrain in electoral politics and coup rationales alike. Calls for integrity reform can easily get co-opted by the conflict dynamics, becoming a new tool to continue the old

conflict. For example, the International Crisis Group has noted Sierra Leonean President Kabbah's use of the anti-corruption commission to threaten potential rivals. *The final article in this issue by Corinna Kreidler also picks up this theme as she reflects on the conflict-sensitivity of anti-corruption work.*

### **Anti-corruption and peacebuilding programming: Similarities and differences**

A review of the anti-corruption and peacebuilding literature shows that the problems these communities seek to address or transform converge around a clear set of themes: issues of power, abuse, trust, impunity, transparency and destructive ideologies such as a zero-sum approach. These are all central to the analysis and response of both fields. Given that both fields are responding to similar problems, it is not surprising that the two communities have commonality in their aspirations: equality, access to resources and the value of the common good, for instance.

Common long-term aspirations require the two fields to seek similar types of change at the individual and at the socio-political level.<sup>22</sup> Both fields seek to



UN PHOTO/ERIC KANALSTEIN

Countries where democracy is fragile and vulnerable always run a risk of electoral rigging. The participation among women in the presidential elections in Afghanistan in August 2009 was larger than usual.

change individual knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and skills. Examples of the work done by anti-corruption campaigners include training in procurement procedures and media programmes on the costs of corruption. The peacebuilding field also does significant work in this realm with training on nonviolent conflict resolution or radio programme challenging stereotypes.

At the socio-political level both fields also work to change institutions, public opinion, social norms and systems. For instance, anti-corruption work focuses on judicial reform or the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission, while peacebuilding work may seek a new law on land reform or elections.

Where the difference lies is mostly in the approaches and tactics utilised by each community, thereby creating the opportunity for collaboration. For instance, the two fields have very different analytic frameworks. "It is illustrative that in 2003-2004 USAID was almost simultaneously working on two new analysis tools, one for conflict and one for corruption. Neither of which cross-referenced the other..."<sup>23</sup> Exploring the possibility of cross-fertilisation of approaches and tactics with the aim of catalysing more fundamental and significant change in the lives of people deserves attention from both fields.

The majority of anti-corruption tools approach corruption through technocratic means such as increasing checks and balances in accounting procedures or providing increased salaries to the civil service. Though a technical


approach to tackle these tangible catalysts of corruption is clearly necessary, it is not sufficient to break the cycle of corrupt behaviour. Conversely much peacebuilding work attempts to transform relationships, strengthen social capital and change institutions to enable peaceful resolution of differences. These approaches focus on the sinews that connect or underpin the issues rather than those that are tactile. Possibly, the combination of these peacebuilding approaches with the existing anti-corruption emphasis may create a far more powerful response.

*One approach to blending a peacebuilding approach to anti-corruption is described in the article on Search for Common Ground in West Africa by Oscar Bloh and Ambrose James, while Amy Margolies explores how one might consider adapting an existing peacebuilding programme, the Burundi Leadership Training Programme, to include corruption issues.*

### This issue

In seeking to spark an interdisciplinary conversation between the peacebuilding and anti-corruption fields, the editors hope the peacebuilding field will start to include corruption more systematically and consciously in their conflict analysis while incorporating anti-corruption into their programme designs. Possible results of this inclusion might be the development of a 'corruption sensitivity' lens for peacebuilding work or further development and testing of the theories of change underpinning both fields.

The structure of this issue of *New Routes* has been developed with the historical separation of the peacebuilding and anti-corruption communities in mind. The first two articles provide brief introductions to core concepts in corruption analysis. Each article in the second section explores the corruption-conflict intersection in a particular country context, establishing how corruption "qualifies" as part of the peacebuilding agenda. The third and final section turns to the nexus of peacebuilding and anti-corruption work, offering words of caution and actionable ideas for peacebuilding professionals.

Finally, included at the end of this edition, the editors have provided a Corruption Resource Page listing some recommended starting points for further consultation. In particular, for those seeking a more interactive forum to expand their engagement with this issue it is suggested they join the anticorruption@elist.tufts.edu email listserv by signing up at <https://elist.tufts.edu/wws/info/anticorruption>. 

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16 For further information, UNDP's Governance Center in Oslo, among others, has produced some excellent reports on corruption measurement available at [http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/flagship/democratic\\_governance\\_assessments.html](http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/flagship/democratic_governance_assessments.html)

17 Clearly 'the West' is not immune to corruption as can be seen by July 2009 corruption scandal in New Jersey, USA involving 44 people ranging from mayors to rabbis. Or from BAE Systems "Al Yamamah" contract in the UK to the former

Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, cases of alleged grand corruption abound in Western States. The omission of these examples is not to imply that the corruption does not occur, but rather due to the explicit focus on the link between conflict/peacebuilding and corruption/anti-corruption.

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23 Cheyanne Church, "Thought Piece: Peacebuilding and Corruption: How May They Collide?" (Medford, MA: The Fletcher School, 12 April 2007), <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/corruptionconf/pdf/Church.pdf> (accessed 11 August 2009).

1 Peacebuilding in this issue refers to all programming that seeks to stop or prevent violence. This narrow definition does not reflect the broader post-conflict statebuilding agenda.

2 In this issue the corruption/anti-corruption field is focused specifically on all efforts to stop or prevent corruption and does not encompass the full governance spectrum.

3 It should be noted that TIRI has done excellent work on corruption in post-conflict reconstruction while the *Journal on International Peacekeeping* (Vol. 16, No.1, 2009) has a recent edition focusing on "Corruption and Peacebuilding" using the wider notion of peacebuilding.

*In this article, two representatives of Global Integrity, an international NGO that tracks governance and corruption trends, describe three different conceptual models for analysing corruption. They then illustrate how these typologies may be “mapped” onto peacebuilding programme areas, using rule of law as an example. Finally it offers an overview of possible anti-corruption tools applicable to a post-conflict setting.*

# Corruption and anti-corruption in peacebuilding: Toward a unified framework

*Raymond June and Nathaniel Heller*

This article provides some basic conceptual models of corruption and their relationship to peacebuilding concerns (i.e., preventing or stopping violence) in conflict and post-conflict situations. We begin with a brief outline of why (anti-) corruption issues have typically not been at the top of the agenda of peacebuilders and vice versa. The remainder of the article maps several typologies of corruption onto a selected post-conflict situation to identify likely sources of corruption in that environment. It concludes with a brief overview of anti-corruption tools that may be more or less appropriate for an immediate post-conflict context.

## **(Anti-)corruption and peacebuilding: A tale of two communities**

The fact that the “(anti-)corruption” and “peacebuilding” communities rarely intersect, whether in the academic literature or on the ground in post-conflict countries, should not come as a complete shock. Retracing the history of the “official” anti-corruption movement may help to explain much of the situation: many of the key players in the international anti-corruption movement were and are veterans of multilateral and bilateral aid agencies. Key founders of the well-known anti-corruption NGO Transparency International (TI), including Peter Eigen and Frank Vogl, were World Bank staff, and TI’s current chair, Huguette Labelle, is the former head of the Canadian International Development Agency. When a nascent

TI linked up with then-World Bank President James Wolfensohn in 1995,<sup>1</sup> the movement was born and made its official first splash with Wolfensohn’s “cancer of corruption” speech in 1996, which officially put the aid community on notice that corruption would no longer be ignored as a development issue. But integrating post-conflict and peacebuilding issues into that agenda has taken far longer.

International anti-corruption efforts have, particularly in recent years, become a cluster of activities associated with multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and the development contractors who implement those agencies’ policies and programmes. Those efforts have increasingly become technocratic in nature, whether focused on building capacity of government auditing and procurement systems, budget and public financial management reform or the professionalisation of the civil service.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the peacebuilding community remains largely (and appropriately) political in its orientation, focused on reconciling competing factions with claims to power and promoting diplomatic dialogue aimed at avoiding armed conflict.<sup>3</sup> Whereas aid agencies are often bound by mandate to explicitly *avoid* interfering in countries’ politics,<sup>4</sup> peacebuilding advocates have no choice but to wade knee-deep into a country’s messy domestic political landscape.

This dichotomy may help to explain why so little attention has been paid to

corruption risks in the context of post-conflict or conflict settings, and equally as to why anti-corruption practitioners

“**What role does political will play in enacting corruption reform in a given country?**”

have spent little effort to understand the dynamics and politics of post-conflict situations that could exacerbate the potential for corruption.

## **Typologies of corruption in conflict and post-conflict countries**

Given the gap between the anti-corruption and peacebuilding communities, a more systematic attempt to integrate peacebuilding issues into the anti-corruption nomenclature is overdue. In this section, we map the major typologies of corruption onto one post-conflict situation in order to identify specific conceptual approaches that best elucidate a key corruption risk area. In so doing, we suggest that multiple analytic tools can and should be used to better understand the underlying causes of corruption in fragile situations. We outline the following major frameworks for analysing corruption<sup>5</sup> as starting points for further analyses of (anti-)corruption and peacebuilding:

*Political economy:* A political economic analysis seeks to understand what socio-cultural, historical and political factors drive corruption in a particular coun-

try. Proponents of this approach argue that mapping out the power dynamics among actors and institutions provides a framework that enables a more holistic, contextual and nuanced understanding of the political economic blockages or incentives/drivers to effective reform. In so doing, questions such as the following can be posed: What role does political will play in enacting corruption reform in a given country? What are the implications of informal networks and social relations in shaping a country's system of governance? What are the cultural, historical, and structural factors behind citizens' distrust of public institutions? The UK's Department of International Development *Drivers of Change* studies, the government of the Netherlands' Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis assessments and similar analyses produced by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency have been at the vanguard of power analysis. Their approaches can be usefully applied to conflict or post-conflict situations where the political climate is volatile and unsettled and nascent peacebuilding efforts are underway.

*Klitgaard's corruption equation:* The governing typology of corruption is provided by academic Robert Klitgaard, who characterises corruption with this classic formulation:

$$C = M + D - A \text{ (corruption = monopoly + discretion - accountability)}^6$$

In other words, corruption is likely to occur when an individual, organisation

or group (the "agent") enjoys a discretionary monopoly of power (in information, goods or services) over "clients" and when accountability of the agent to those clients is weak or absent. The Klitgaard model is frequently used to guide analyses of bureaucratic corruption and can be especially helpful in understanding the potential for corruption in government-run (or donor agency-provided) service delivery and in designing bureaucratic systems.

*International donors and external/foreign agents:* Recent studies have illuminated the role of international actors in reconstruction-related corruption. Some have suggested that the international community should be held accountable and operate in a more transparent manner than has normally been the case.<sup>7</sup> Others have suggested that the presence of international actors can import and perpetuate corruption in developing, conflict and post-conflict societies. This line of argument has focused on how external agents can distort local social relations and political economies if they use inappropriate forms of development and humanitarian assistance, thereby generating (if not exacerbating already existing) instability.<sup>8</sup> This paradigm nicely complements the traditional political economy and power analysis approaches described above and may be especially applicable to peacebuilding efforts that involve foreign actors as mediators.



## **Peacebuilding advocates have no choice but to wade knee-deep into a country's domestic political landscape.**

How can these approaches to understanding and unpacking the potential for corruption be applied to post-conflict and peacebuilding situations? We now

map the above frameworks onto one generic post-conflict situation to understand how and where we should expect to find corruption. As such, it should be considered an illustrative rather than comprehensive mapping exercise.

### *Rule of law and judicial reform*

Reforming the judiciary and law enforcement is a key concern for those committed to building peace in former war-torn countries. Efforts to strengthen the police, support the rule of law and instil public trust in the justice sector are immensely challenging in and of themselves; the corrosive effect of corruption in the justice sector makes it even harder. Strengthening the transparency and accountability of judicial institutions and the rule of law is crucial in sustaining peace in countries recovering from war and conflict.

The Klitgaard model and the use of power analysis can be helpful in anticipating systemic vulnerabilities in the justice sector in post-conflict settings. Looming large in these settings is a lack of accountability and oversight over law enforcement officials, due in large part to a lack of human capital, poor or devastated infrastructure, and linkages between the police, paramilitary, military forces and other armed factions involved in the previous or ongoing conflict.

Police and other law enforcement bodies are thus often able to operate with virtual impunity, worrying little about the consequences of human rights abuses, taking bribes to dismiss arrests of supporters (or selectively detain political opponents), being implicated in extrajudicial killings or perpetuating a system of illegal, indefinite pre-trial detention. This sense of impunity may be compounded by a lack of qualified judges, prosecutors, public defenders or ombudsman-type citizen-advocates who otherwise could provide a check on an all-too-powerful police apparatus. If such checks and balances are



PHOTO: JØRN STJERNEKLAR/PHOENIX

*Money changing in the streets is an everyday occurrence in countries without a functional or reliable banking system.*

in fact present, they unfortunately may still be part of the corrupt “industry” of bribes and cash payoffs that often circulate through the justice sector in many post-conflict situations.

The Klitgaard and political economic approaches, while seemingly simplistic, do offer solutions (if not easy ones) to these law enforcement corruption vulnerabilities in the post-conflict setting:

- 1) increase accountability over law en-

dence and the detention and interrogation of detainees. Peacebuilders operating in an environment where judicial reform is paramount would do well to promote programmes that emphasise the judicial accountability mechanisms available to citizens.

#### **Anti-corruption tools**

Once the corruption dynamics have been analysed, one must turn to the pragmatic issue of determining the appropriate anti-corruption tool relevant to the post-conflict context. As a brief overview three categories of tools are described:

monitoring and diagnostic assessments, participation and empowerment of citizens and finally targeted reform.

*Monitoring and diagnostic assessments:* Over the past several years, there has been significant growth in the production and sophistication of assessments used to measure and monitor governance, including the area of corruption and corruption control. In turn, donor

programmes and funds have been subjected to increased monitoring and evaluation by those who wish to understand where corruption risks may lie in fragile states and peacebuilding activities.

In order to find or design the most appropriate governance and corruption measurement and monitoring tool, it is necessary to distinguish an integrity framework from an anti-corruption approach. Anti-corruption programmes and assessments tend toward a “negative” and punitive focus on governance performance (focused often on investigations and prosecutions), while a public integrity framework approaches anti-corruption and good governance in a more holistic and “positive” fashion by diagnosing opportunities for improvement over time. As such, public integrity assessments do not measure corruption (a virtually impossible task) but rather the effectiveness of the institutions and accountability mechanisms that keep corruption in check.<sup>9</sup> Determining the appropriate assessment strategy to support a government or donor-driven peacebuilding programme necessitates establishing which framework, anti-corruption or integrity, to choose first (or whether to use them in combination).

### “ **Efforts to strengthen the police, support the rule of law and instil public trust in the justice sector are immensely challenging.** ”

forcement through appropriate checks and balances (e.g., effective internal affairs divisions, ombudsman-type citizen advocate mechanisms, independent and professional prosecutors and/or responsive human rights commissions), and 2) promote legal and procedural reforms that minimise the potential for discretion on the part of law enforcement officials in the context of making arrests, the handling of evi-

PHOTO: JØRN STJERNEKLAR/PHOENIX




*The mouth of the Congo River forms one of Africa's largest harbours. Matadi is the chief sea port of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Because of theft the port is losing a lot of goods and thus has to be strictly guarded.*

For example, to assess the effectiveness of formal and informal justice and dispute resolution mechanisms as they impact conflict prevention, users of measurement tools might want to consider whether an integrity or anti-corruption approach is appropriate in the particular country context. From there, they are likely to weigh the following issues: what is being measured (e.g., existence of laws and institutions, the *de facto* effectiveness of such laws, etc.), the appropriate methodology (e.g., qualitative and/or quantitative) and conceptual framework (e.g., political economy, Klitgaard approach) and, lastly, whether existing indices suffice.<sup>10</sup>

*Participation and empowerment of citizens:* Enhancing the participation of citizens and civil society actors has been a key focus in anti-corruption efforts. These efforts are now often referred to as “demand-side reforms”. In many parts of the world, local NGO representatives, business groups and ordinary citizens have actively engaged in promoting improved government accountability on issues such as access to information and more transparent government procurement through workshops, community dialogue programmes, classic advocacy programmes and awareness-raising efforts. Incorporating domestic actors into the peacebuilding process is similarly important in achieving local buy-in and ownership of peacebuilding goals. Given how important it is for peacebuilders to be sensitive to local conditions, citizens and the rank and file should be able to provide significant input at every stage of the peacebuilding process. If not, opportunities for misunderstanding and grievances that fuelled past conflicts will undoubtedly re-emerge.

*Targeted reforms:* There is an emerging consensus in the governance and anti-corruption community that ambitious anti-corruption campaigns (driven by centralised anti-corruption commissions) are largely ineffective.<sup>11</sup> In the context of post-war situations, large-scale corruption reform projects carry the particular danger of feeding into public cynicism when high expectations are not met. This, in turn, has the potential to destabilise fragile states. Designing modest, targeted programmes to curb corruption with robust monitoring and realistic follow-up should be considered by the peacebuilding profession in order to avoid such risks.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

In this article, we discussed some of the reasons why the peacebuilding and (anti-)corruption communities have talked past each other. We proceeded to outline a framework to help diagnose the links between corruption/anti-corruption and violence prevention. Although it is beyond the scope of this article, similar applications of corruption typologies to conflict and post-conflict situations could be extended to other areas germane to peacebuilding such as security, organised crime, service delivery and armed conflict. Our hope is to have provided an initial framing for further public discussion. 

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1 Jenny Ng, “Anti-corruption crusader,” *Sun2Surf*, (28 October 2005), <http://www.sun2surf.com/article.cfm?id=11764>

2 Cf. Cheyanne Church, “The Nexus: Corruption, Conflict & Peacebuilding,” *The Fletcher School* (2007), <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/corruptionconf/index.html>, 5

3 Ashraf, Ghani and Clare Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11. The authors suggest that effective strategies to promote state-building should be less technocratic in orientation.

4 See, for example, the World Bank’s governing mandate: IBRD Articles of Agreement, Article IV, Section 10 (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTABOUTUS/Resources/ibrd-articlesofagreement.pdf>).

5 Due to space constraints, we deliberately leave out other conceptual models such as “state capture” though they may be useful explanatory frameworks to understand forms of corruption in post-conflict economies not covered in this article.

6 Robert Klitgaard, *Controlling Corruption*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

7 See, for example, Vera Devine, “Corruption in Post-War Reconstruction: The Experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Tiri* (N.d.), <http://www.tiri.org/images/stories/NIR%20Documents/PWR%20Bosnia&Herz%20Devine.pdf>, 6-7.

8 Daniel Large, “Introductory Survey: Corruption and Reconstruction after War,” *Tiri* (N.d.), <http://www.tiri.org/images/stories/NIR%20Documents/PWR%20Overview%20Large.pdf>, 3-4

9 Marianne Camerer, “Measuring Public Integrity,” *Journal of Democracy* 17(1) (2006): 152-165

10 For more in-depth guidance on how to use corruption measurement tools, see Raymond June, Afroza Chowdhury, Nathaniel Heller, and Jonathan Werve, *A Users’ Guide to Measuring Corruption* (Oslo: UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 2008). Also available online at: [http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/flagship/users\\_guide\\_measuring\\_corruption.html](http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/flagship/users_guide_measuring_corruption.html)

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*Drawing on an extensive body of research and writing, this article summarises three distinctive “syndromes” of corruption corresponding to different political economies and conflict contexts. The case of the Caucasus illustrates how ‘diagnosing’ the corruption context can help lead to realistic reform strategies which do not incite further violence.*

## Corruption and change in the Caucasus: Will reform bring conflict or peace?

Michael Johnston

Corruption and conflict are intertwined in the states and breakaway regions of the Caucasus, an area which includes the states of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Caucasus could also be said to extend to the north into Russia, and in many segments includes a variety of tribal and separatist groups, along with personal political followings that come closer to resembling political machines than real national political parties.

Societies in the region reflect a complex mix of loyalties and resentments. In some respects the various factions and combatants know each other all too well. Just the degree of controversy over boundaries, and over the status of places like Nagorno-Karabakh, is enough to suggest that the region is more of an arena of conflict and contention than a well-defined multi-state region.

The prospects for compromise thus are few, and the cross-cutting divisions found in larger pluralistic societies do not exist. Corruption is more than an irritant: in a 2009 interview Vitaliy Naumkin, director of Russia’s Academy of Sciences Oriental Studies Institute, argued that corruption and clan-based feuds, rather than nationalism as such, were the driving forces of recent conflict in the region.<sup>1</sup> Clearly reform is in order – but of what sort? Understanding contrasting varieties of corruption may reveal both the lingering effects of the Soviet past and ways in which reform might make the situation somewhat better – or, dramatically worse.

In a recent book<sup>2</sup> I suggested that corruption varies not only in terms of amounts, but also qualitatively. Contrasts in political and economic opportunities and the strength of institutions point to four distinctive “syndromes” of corruption. Most reforms draw upon the “Influence Markets” syndrome found primarily in affluent democracies, where wealth interests buy influence over specific decisions, but three

other varieties – Official Moguls, Oligarchs and Clans, and Elite Cartels – are of particular relevance to the Caucasus.

*Official Moguls* are corrupt rulers and their personal favourites who use state power to intrude into the economy with impunity. Moguls may form alliances with favoured business figures or colonise those interests on behalf of themselves and their friends. In smaller societies Official Mogul networks may be tightly organised around top figures, family members, and personal followers. Even where political liberalisation is occurring, countervailing forces capable of checking the moguls are few. Serious Official Mogul corruption can be unpredictable, given the dominant role of a few individuals. Where those figures perceive significant personal threats, it can intensify conflict since personal domination, and the rewards flowing from it, may all be at stake.

*Oligarchs and Clans* arise where both politics and the economy are rapidly opening up and institutions are very weak. Politics, the economy and high-level crime are dominated by a few powerful, contending figures. They and their personal clans operate in arenas both public and private – a poorly-institutionalised distinction in such societies. Underlying such corruption is *pervasive insecurity*: wealth and power are up for grabs, sometimes on a large scale, in a setting of few effective rules. Winners find it difficult to protect their gains, while losers have little official recourse. Violence and protection markets often result. The situation will be unstable, however, as loyalty to an oligarch depends on the rewards they can provide. Influence within law enforcement and the courts will be valuable, but organised crime may be even more strategic for some clans.

*Elite Cartels* are networks of diverse elites who, maintaining hegemony in the face of rising political and economic competition, have a shared stake in corruption. Official and social institutions are only moderately strong. Elite networks compensate for weak institutions through large-scale deals marked more by collusion than contention. Cartels may include politicians, bureaucrats, media owners, military officers and business people. Nominally competing political parties may share corrupt benefits among themselves, again as a way of seeing off competitors and maintaining the *status quo*.

Elite Cartel corruption is not beneficial in any absolute sense: it is often linked to ineffective legislatures, extensive state intervention (legal or otherwise) in the economy, politicised policy and banking, and mutual “colonisation” among business, political parties, and the bureaucracy. But in the medium term Elite Cartel corruption fosters *de facto* stability, creating a more inviting setting for sustained economic growth (the list of Elite Cartel cases includes South Korea, Botswana, and Chile, for example). Over the long term, however, such elite networks may adapt poorly to changing economic circumstances, turning accumulated stresses into crises.

### The Caucasus, past and future

The Soviet era left a powerful legacy of Official Mogul corruption in the Caucasus. Corruption fed on party monopolies over power and resources, and on the personal interests of leaders.<sup>3</sup> That syndrome continues to plague the region even where it persists in a less centralised fashion.<sup>4</sup> Top and middle-level leaders and their personal favourites still dominate corruption. Drug trafficking is extensive,<sup>5</sup> and dealings in precious stones have long been a feature of elite life. For top figures corruption has been lucrative indeed. For example, Az-

erbajani news weekly *Hesabat* reported that nine of the country's ten wealthiest men in 2005 were in the government.<sup>6</sup>

Political and personal interventions into the economy continue. Opportunities not controlled by the regimes remain relatively scarce although Georgia, with its aggressive economic liberalisation, is increasingly an exception marked only by low-stakes corruption in jobs and petty administrative favours.<sup>7</sup> Azerbaijan's corruption is more based on oil, and is complicated by nationality issues and the status of breakaway regions.

Consequences vary too: Armenia has parlayed the relative stability of its Official Mogul corruption into moderate economic success.<sup>8</sup> Still, corruption across the region shares key attributes: officials abuse power and resources with impunity; frequent acts of extortion<sup>9</sup> reflect officials' leverage. Corruption receives top-level protection.

### Implications for conflict

Official Mogul corruption may "freeze" conflicts. Hated enemies are quite useful to the Moguls, who can set themselves up as the only alternative in a setting where everything seems to be at stake, all the while enriching themselves and their friends. Secure Moguls have little reason to reach out beyond personal circles: they do not need additional support, which would only spread the spoils more thinly. Strong Moguls can exist alongside considerable instability, often finding corruption useful for neutralising rivals. Even where political alternatives exist, foregoing today's corrupt benefits for a riskier and quite possibly poorer future will be unattractive to followers.

Still, while Official Moguls may rule and enrich themselves with impunity, they can hardly be said to *govern*. Breaking out of frozen or stalemated conflicts requires negotiation and willingness to compromise, as well as the ability to follow through on commitments in effective ways. None of those steps will come easy to Mogul-captured governments lacking basic institutional capacity and credibility. Indeed, sustained conflict will often be a useful way to divert attention from shortcomings of governance.

### A choice of futures

The Caucasus is unlikely to become another Swiss Confederation within the foreseeable future. Still, change will come to the Caucasus and to its patterns of allegiance, conflict, and corruption, whether

we plan for it or not. Conflict, corruption and their interactions will not vanish but rather evolve, and the challenge is one of steering change away from potentially disastrous outcomes toward others that, though far from perfect, may yet hold possibilities of peace and sustained development. Looked at that way, peacebuilding becomes a matter of guiding change toward sustainable "halfway" situations. It is also a challenge not to make matters worse in the process of trying to do good. Could Official Mogul corruption give way to the relatively stable and economically beneficial Elite Cartels syndrome, even though the latter is far from ideal? Or will it slide into the abyss of Oligarchs and Clans?

Bad as Official Mogul corruption is, Oligarchs and Clans would be worse – pervasive yet unpredictable, and often violent. This syndrome is the most harmful of all for economic development and the emergence of trust between actors. Associated violence both reflects and perpetuates the absence of viable laws and institutions. A state so weak that its basic functions are hijacked by oligarchs cannot restrain conflict, broker agreements, establish

rights or ease insecurity. In the Caucasus the wrong mix of anti-corruption and liberalising measures could well have the unintended, yet potentially disastrous, result of fragmenting Official Mogul situations into contending Oligarchs and Clans.

Elite Cartels are scarcely "good corruption". They are hegemonic networks of elites who stave off political and economic competition. But this syndrome may have positive consequences too. Years ago Namier observed that "no one bribes where he can bully".<sup>10</sup> Elite Cartel corruption encourages elites who cannot bully each other to coalesce. That process takes place around a pool of corrupt resources, but is still more integrative than Official Moguls and less violent than Oligarchs and Clans. Strong *state* institutions will take a long time to build and, in post-conflict societies, even longer to win legitimacy, but Elite Cartels might amount to a relatively durable *political settlement* that can emerge more quickly.<sup>11</sup> Colluding elites have a stake in the status quo. While they can resist or co-opt competitors in the short run, they neither enjoy impunity nor unchecked power. Further, the emergence of strong



PHOTO: PETER WILLIAMS

Street vendor in Stepanakert, capital of the much disputed area Nagorno-Karabakh.

economies in a variety of Elite Cartel societies suggests that they may provide predictability, and *de facto* limits on the worst official abuses, useful for launching economic growth.

Why would warring factions and their leaders accept an Elite Cartels situation over what they know now? They might not, particularly if reformers define all corruption as something to be eradicated. But an Elite Cartel alignment is less violent and dangerous. It is also likely to be more profitable in the long run, both above the table and below, as an economy gathers force and gains prove easier to protect. Leaders and followers may find greater opportunity and security under such a regime and be less likely to view their relationships with other groups in zero-sum terms.

### Getting there

A transition from Official Moguls toward Elite Cartels cannot be engineered by reformers. The key lies in facilitating gradual change while not creating Oligarchs and Clans.

Oligarch-and-Clan corruption thrives on insecurity, and leaders who feel a sense of threat are likely to steal aggressively, resort to violence and resist alignments with other elites. Thus, reformers should avoid overly-rapid economic and political liberalisation. Particularly risky will be aggressive privatisation or a rapid influx of investment requiring a sound framework of laws, courts and bureaucracy for success: the sudden availability of major new resources may just fuel official abuses. Holding elections for their own sake may only increase the sense of elite insecurity and zero-sum contention, encouraging official political interference via both "administrative resources"<sup>12</sup> and violence. Public morality campaigns could well become the pretexts for revenge. Short timelines on reforms may encourage leaders to play along in order to tap into outside funding, but will accomplish little. Institutional improvement schemes without broad-based political "ownership" may just create administrative bailiwicks for Moguls and their favourites.

Reform will be a long-term process, and in some places there may be no immediate alternative to the Moguls themselves. Instead, reformers should reduce insecurity for elites, and then *gradually* increase political and economic alternatives for leaders and followers alike. That might involve some familiar measures – strengthening the press, courts and

non-governmental organisations, securing property rights and instituting more reliable and understandable taxation, and implementing basic civil liberties.<sup>13</sup> There is nothing novel in that list, save what is deliberately left out: a major law-enforcement drive against past and present corruption. Needed changes should not become direct challenges to the Moguls. They will accommodate competing democratising forces only grudgingly, but are more likely to do so if the future offers a continued share of wealth and power rather than the loss of everything.

Over the longer term a variety of other strategic changes may become possible, including more independent courts and law enforcement, more credible security for business and investment, enhanced bureaucratic capacity and party- and parliament-building efforts. Even if the latter is a one-party or modified one-party affair, it may usher in rule *by law*<sup>14</sup> – government by rules that are at least written and known, if not always fair or popular – even if not attaining the rule *of law*.

How will we judge progress? We would hope violence would decrease and participation in social groups and processes would grow. As for corruption itself, international corruption scores do not offer a useful guide.<sup>15</sup> Indirect measures<sup>16</sup> are far better: how long it takes to get a license or a telephone, and how many steps are involved, or how much a government pays for basic commodities like fuel and concrete, can demonstrate better government and show where the scope for corruption is being reduced. Indications of sustained, equitably distributed economic growth might signal reductions in insecurity and zero-sum contention.

It may be true that no one bribes when he can bully, but when people – even those with a rich history of mutual dislike – can approach each other as equals within a secure framework of institutions, trusting that outcomes will be broadly just, neither bullying nor bribery will seem quite so tempting. 🍌

1 "Feuds, Corruption, Not Separatism behind Caucasus Violence." Inosmi.ru interview report as reprinted in Johnson's Russia List #2009-137 (July 23, 2009). Archive available at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/default.cfm> (viewed 6 August 2009).

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3 Kramer, John M. 1977. "Political Corruption in the USSR." *Western Political Quarterly* (June), pp. 213-24; Simis, Konstantin. 1982. *USSR: The Corrupt Society*. New York: Simon and Schuster; Stefes, Christoph H. 2005. "Clash of Institutions: Clientelism and Corruption vs. Rule of Law", Ch. 1 (pp. 3-19) in Christopher P. M. Waters (ed.), *The State of Law in the South Caucasus*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 5, 8.

5 See, in the case of Abkhazia, Mitaishvili, Ramaz. 2007. "Narcotrafficking in Abkhazia." Abkhazia Institute for Social and Economic Research, May 31. Online at <http://www.abkhazia.com/content/view/122/2/> (viewed 26 June 2007).

6 Chivers, C. J. 2005. "A Purge, Coup Rumors and Police Crackdowns Herald Election Season in Azerbaijan." *New York Times*, October 29.

7 Stefes, Christoph H. 2004. "Systemic Corruption as an Intervening Variable in Post-Soviet Political and Economic Transitions: Armenia and Georgia in Comparison." Paper presented at the Caucasus Regional Policy Symposium sponsored by the International Research & Exchange Board (IREX) and the Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Shepherdstown, WV.

8 Not surprisingly, in systems dominated by one or a few top figures, much depends upon leaders' agendas. Economies in Official Mogul societies such as Indonesia, where Suharto pursued aggressive growth-oriented policies, experienced significant expansion. But where leaders' goals amounted to little more than plunder – as in Mobutu's Zaire – the economic effects of Official Mogul corruption were catastrophic. See Johnston, *Syndromes*, Ch. 7.

9 Bagirov, Sabit. 2000. "Problem of Corruption in Azerbaijan." Baku: Transparency International Azerbaijan: 2-3. Online at <http://www.transparency-az.org/files/27.pdf> (viewed 4 April 2006).

10 Namier, Lewis B. 1930. *England in the Age of the American Revolution*. London, Macmillan, 4-5.

11 This argument is developed more extensively in Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption*, Chs. 5 and 8.

12 Ikstens, Janis, Daniel Smilov, and Marcin Walecki. 2002. *Campaign Finance in Central and Eastern Europe: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead* (Washington, DC: IFES/USAID).

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*In this article, Peter Uvin draws on his latest book: *Life after War. A People's History of Burundi* published in 2009, for which he interviewed hundreds of ordinary Burundians. Here he argues that corruption in the short-term met donors' needs and played a stabilising role, but Burundians may want change.*

## Corruption and violence in Burundi

Peter Uvin

Since independence in 1962, politics in Burundi has become more unstable and violent with each decade. Violence along ethnic lines has become a constant of life, hundreds of thousands have died and many more lost their possessions. The economy has declined and coups d'état have been frequent.

The Burundian conflict is like an atom, composed of two central electrons – ill-governance and competition for power along ethnic lines – that spin around a nucleus of massive poverty and institutional weakness. Burundi's economy is one of the world's poorest, landlocked and devoid of any significant resource. The institutions of the state have hardly ever worked the way they were written in law. Corruption, social exclusion, impunity, total lack of accountability and clientelism have prevailed for decades. The main constant of public life has been a brutal competition for power and its attendant mate-

rial advantages, played out increasingly along ethnic lines.

The latest, longest and most destructive violence was the civil war that began in 1993 and formally ended in 2005. It had different and contradictory impacts on corruption. Public salaries stagnated (if they were paid at all) and jobs were destroyed rather than created. The entire economy went into free fall. As a result, everyone tried to make some personal gain in a desperate attempt to survive. Corruption and all sorts of abuses of power grew exponentially. Many Burundians nowadays talk about corruption as being the result of the war. While this is false – it prevailed pre-war already – this image testifies to the widespread sense that corruption has changed in nature and volume during those years.

But the war and the transition also created factors that ran in the oppo-

site direction. Since independence, most Burundians have lived in a state that, while formally based on a Weberian<sup>1</sup> rational-bureaucratic model akin to states in Western Europe, in reality functioned along lines more akin to pre-colonial client-patron relationships. Ordinary Burundians knew how this system worked – how to behave in



***The war provided the final death blow to the illusions ordinary people had.***

order to solicit benefits (even though in theory as citizens they had rights to those benefits), how to connect to the more powerful, how to donate little gifts to get things done. To Westerners, this may have looked bad or corrupt, but to most Burundians this was familiar terrain: things had always worked this way, and, as long as the power-holders were people with some traditional claim to power who delivered the goods, this system possessed a certain legitimacy.

Over the decades, though, this system had become severely weakened by administrative reorganisation, the emergence of national and local leadership that was entirely devoid of traditional legitimacy, and, from the 1980s onwards, severe economic decline. The war provided the final death blow to the illusions ordinary people had. It laid bare the illegitimacy of the system, as well as its total ineffectiveness, and the fact that nobody in power gave a damn about the needs and the interest of the majority of the population. It weaned people, maybe once and for all, of any belief in the old system. They want change.

In addition, during the war the state lost its monopoly of information and organisation. New media – first newspapers, then radios – came into being, as did a much wider range of NGOs. Initially, many of these new civil soci-



*Confiscated loose firearms presented to the media during a press briefing at the headquarters of the Philippine National Police in suburban Manila in August 2009. Over one million unlicensed firearms are in the hands of civilians and rebels in the country.*

ety actors were ethnically- and urban-biased, but over time new ones came into being, and smart young men and women built, piece by little piece, a different, pluralist Burundi civil society. New political parties were born during the war as well. The Burundi of 2005 was a far more intellectually and politically diverse place than the one before 1993. This, too, has the potential to help curb ill governance and corruption.

### The price for progress

At war's end, a number of new dynamics were added to the previous ones. First, total aid increased dramatically. A lot of the new international funding went to reconstruction and rehabilitation projects (reconstruction of roads, bridges, hospitals, schools), as well as continued emergency aid (food aid, repatriation and shelter, etc.). These projects are cash cows for the corrupt, providing almost endless opportunities for illicit gain. Especially in the initial years, when outdated security measures were still in place and oversight was sporadic and short, a lot of money could be made by those without scruples and with good connections.

At the same time, there was a general (and justified) sense within the international community that the transition from war to peace was the most important challenge for Burundi to achieve, and for donors to support. Getting former opponents to work together, armed forces to lay down arms and integrate, politicians to vote laws that could endanger their personal future – those were extremely tough challenges. All international players were focused on those goals, and tolerating a bit of corruption was seen as a necessary and acceptable price for progress. And hence the years of the transition became maybe the most corrupt ones Burundi had ever known, with more than 50 per cent of the funds of major bilateral and multilateral donors frequently disappearing without any trace.

After the transition (i.e., the peaceful 2005 elections), little changed. A new, democratically elected government was now in power, and donors were pleased

with their success. The new government, flush with the presumed legitimacy of electoral victory, made sure it pushed back hard on any attempt to control its behaviour (one of the first things it did was unceremoniously kicking the

head of the UN out of the country), and donors were happy to go along. And corruption continued unabated.

Second, a decent argument could be made that corruption favoured stability of the transition. What we call corruption is simply good politics in a situation where few other sources of individual progress exist than those provided by the state. The new rulers needed to reward the tens of thousands of people – fundraisers, students and teachers, supporters in the diaspora, traders who sold them goods, local officials whose sympathies lay with them – who had

☞ ***The Burundi of 2005 is a far more intellectually and politically diverse place than the one before 1993.***



*A woman delivers ballots from a great number of political parties at a polling station in Bujumbura, Burundi, on 4 July 2005. This was the first parliamentary poll since the civil war began in 1993.*

supported them during their years in the bush. These supporters needed – deserved, demanded – a recompense too, lest they turn against the regime.

Second, opponents needed to buy into the new dispensation. Corruption and clientelism were used to encourage opposition politicians to ally themselves with the winning party. This happened already during the transition, as it became clear the CNDD/FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy/ Forces for the Defense of Democracy) would overwhelmingly win the elections. Politicians from other parties – especially Tutsi – flocked to the party, thus allowing it to claim to be a national rather than a Hutu party. This process of cooptation born out of a desire to access advantages may undermine “true,” Western-style, competitive party politics, but it does have a stabilising, conflict-reducing effect.

Hence, in the short run, both the need and the opportunity for corruption increased seriously after the war, and, in the name of supporting a young democratic post-war regime, the international community looked the other way. This was understandable and may have contributed to the establishment of peace and the organisation of elections. The longer run effects of this practice, however, are dangerous.

### Risk for renewed conflict

Among the population at large, the continued, if not increased, prevalence of corruption produces cynicism and anger. In my interviews in Burundi, corruption – from local officials giving emergency aid to their family to national leaders building giant villas – was the most frequently mentioned political issue by people of all ethnicities, all income levels, all ages, rural or urban. As the transition from war to peace was also one from authoritarian rule to democracy in Burundi, this discredits democracy. People do not defend, or invest in, institutions they do not care about or believe in. Corruption, thus, undermines one of the most important potential gains of the post-war settlement.

In addition, corruption frequently leads to local-level conflicts, which, while not a prime cause of the civil war, constitute facilitating factors, the way pre-existing nutritional deficiencies facilitate the contraction of new infections by a person. In Burundi, as elsewhere, centrally-instigated violence spreads through the country by feeding into lo-

cal conflicts and grievances. Corruption and its corollary – lack of rule of law – create a multitude of local points of contention, sense of exclusion and abuse, lingering angers at past abuses. This increases the risk for new dynamics of violence to take root in Burundi.

That said, corruption may also promote an opposite dynamic: the near-universal unhappiness with its continued prevalence contains the seeds for a new (non-ethnic) politics. Condemnation of corruption and a widespread desire among all citizens to be treated more equitably and transparently by the state suggest that people are ready for a different political game. As corruption now prevails under a blatantly Hutu-dominated regime, it becomes increasingly clear to people that it is the system that is at fault – not the (Tutsi or Hutu) individuals. Certainly many intellectuals have started seeing it that way. This may lay the basis for non-ethnic coalitions of anger and political change, if credible and non-corrupt political entrepreneurs manage to emerge in Burundi.

### Conclusion

Transitions like Burundi’s are moments of uncertainty. The old is still there but new factors have emerged as well. There are factors pushing towards change, and factors pushing towards the return of the status quo. This holds both at the top of society and for ordinary citizens. There *are* political openings here, but they are unclear, vague, threatened by closure. The doors are neither open nor closed until people learn where the hinges are, how the locks work, and how much pressure the wood can take.

Corruption increased during the war. At the end of the war, some factors pushed in favour of its continuation if not further rise: greatly increased amounts of aid, including a lot of reconstruction funds, and this against a backdrop of unwillingness by the international community to look too critically at the transitional or newly elected government. The new people in power, after more than a decade in the bush, feel they deserve to eat well too, for a change – they also have families to think of. Accommodations, mostly “illegal” and informal ones, need to be found for the many people who provided services to the winning side during the war. And opponents need to be

brought into the fold, so that medium-term survival of the new regime can be assured. The broad notion of corruption – contracts allocated without bidding, fake NGOs managing international aid, quotas allocated to politicians, primary commodities controlled and hoarded by supporters of the regime, legal judgments made in return for money, food aid distributed to the locally well-connected, roads and buildings built shabbily but at full cost, juicy jobs awarded on the basis of relationship and not competence – provides a tool (maybe



## Both the need and the opportunity for corruption increased seriously after the war.

the only tool) for the ruling elites to do politics with, to stabilise their position and, with it, the country.

But other factors run counter to this. The war has also led to a stronger demand by Burundians for citizenship: they are angry at the system, diagnose its ills more clearly, and talk about it more critically. A much freer and more competent press, and a growing civil society strengthen this. People may also come to realise, as some intellectuals do, that corruption is not limited to “those Tutsi” but to all people in power – a situation that could lead either to paralysis or to a non-ethnic sense of grievance.

Nonetheless, the likelihood that the system returns to the situation *ante quo* is larger than the one of serious change. The country’s core problems – the nucleus of the atom, to use my earlier image – have only become worse: the poverty more massive, the infrastructure more destroyed, the institutions more weakened. Under these conditions, corruption, and its corrosive effects on democracy and peace, is likely to continue. The only ways for donors to counter this are to be far more willing to expose and fight corruption (mostly done with their own money, after all) than they are now, and for them to build far more strongly on the emerging social demands for citizenship than they have. Unfortunately, neither of these has occurred. 🗞️

<sup>1</sup> Named after the German political economist and sociologist Max Weber, 1864-1914.

*Using Lebanon as an example, this article explains how power-sharing peace agreements based on consensus enabled and then institutionalised communal corruption. Thus rather than ending the war, these peace agreements perpetuated a context rife for future grievance and violence.*

# Communal corruption and peacebuilding in Lebanon

Gaëlle Kibranian

In September 2020, the Lebanese will celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of Lebanon. What they will remember most is that the history of Greater Lebanon, which was established in September 1920 by the French mandate, has been one of communal violence, civil (or *un-civil*) strife, foreign intervention and national reconciliation conferences hosted in international cities.

This article neither provides a review of the explanations for continuous communal violence in Lebanon, nor does it examine why the national reconciliation conferences of Taef (1989) and Doha (2008) were more successful than those of Geneva, Lausanne, Damascus or la Celle Saint-Cloud. Rather, by using the Taef and Doha agreements as case studies, the article aims to demonstrate that the lack of clear commitments and mechanisms to ensure good governance, rule of law and democratic reforms in the Taef agreement helped lead to the continued divisions and societal conflicts which made necessary a second conference in Doha eighteen years later.

## **Pre-Taef period: Traditionalism against communal mobilisation**

The Lebanon of the 1960s and early 1970s has frequently been referred to as the Switzerland of the East and the bridge between the East and the West. Relying on a service economy, mainly tourism and banking, Lebanon was also credited with having a different trajectory than that of its neighbouring Arab countries. In the 1950s and 1960s, authoritarian rulers and centralised economic systems dominated in the other Arab states, but Lebanon enjoyed periodical parliamentary elections and a pro-market economic system until 1972.

This façade of liberalism masked substantive economic and social discrepancies, including unequal development between major urban centres and their

peripheries. The traditional political class did not show any serious will to reform the system and to ensure a more equitable distribution of income. The political leadership managed to manipulate electoral laws and guarantee their representation within the system, despite a few attempts at reform and institution-building, such as the establishment of the Central Bank, the Central Authority for Administrative Reform, the Civil Service Council and the Central Inspection Bureau during the mandate of President Fouad Shehab (1958-1964).

In the pre-war period, and, indeed, during the civil war itself, the ruling elite and competing militias struggled to secure access to state resources in order to satisfy the needs of their constituencies. Corruption was not only tolerated, but encouraged. The elites created and consolidated their patronage networks, providing services and certain 'public goods' in order to preserve their influence over their constituencies.

## **Post-Taef, Pre-Doha: Towards a win-win situation**

Following 15 years of one of the deadliest and most destructive conflicts since World War II, the Taef Agreement ended the civil war. It was presented in Lebanon as a solution for returning the country to political normalcy. The Taef Agreement adjusted the political representation of the different religious sects, giving Christians and Muslims equal representation in both the Parliament and the Council of Ministers. At the same time, it introduced balanced religious and sectarian representation in the upper positions of the public sector including the security agencies.

It also strengthened the power of the Speaker of Parliament and the Prime Minister, who, together with the President, created a troika system replacing other political institutions. This troika

system in Lebanon led to new bargains and political arrangements based on patronage networks, especially via appointments to official positions. Here, "[c]orruption became one of the means to maintain this consensus and it became tolerated as long as it served the preservation of peace".<sup>1</sup>

This system operated under the direct control of the Syrian regime with international and Arab blessings. It proved to be stable from 1990 until 2005. However, stability and consensus came at the expense of rule of law, democratic reforms and good governance. For instance, in 1990 an amnesty law was promulgated protecting warlords for crimes committed before that year; this in turn helped secure political and administrative positions for these warlords in the system. Undemocratic electoral laws were adopted and voting results were manipulated under the pretext of protecting communal peace. Political control over the judiciary was maintained in order to avoid prosecuting public officials who faced charges of corruption. Appointments in the administration were agreed upon based on favouritism, not merit.

However, the case of the Taef clearly shows that consensus does not necessarily mean long-term peacebuilding. As highlighted by Adwan, "... In negotiating the end of hostilities, and after war, countries often reach agreements that lead to deadlocks, the reason being that they try to find win-win situations and consensus-based resolutions of conflict".<sup>2</sup> The concept of an agreement based on consensus certainly leads to a solution to the problem at stake, but soon enough the historical quarrels resurface.

## **Doha Agreement: The re-emergence of a national unity Government**

The assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005, and the

withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in April 2005, unleashed two competing political alliances referred to as “March 14” and “March 8”. Elections in summer 2005 brought the anti-Syrian March 14 group to power with a relative majority. However, given the undemocratic nature of the electoral law, the legitimacy of the ruling majority was fiercely contested. Coming at a time of regional and international polarisation, the dispute led to political deadlock and large-scale protests in Lebanon. The downward spiral of events was a direct result of the lack of substantive peace-building following the Taef Agreement, and it furthered the gap between both factions. By May 2008 gunmen from both sides took the streets of Beirut, and violence spread throughout the country.

With the fighting at risk of escalation, the two camps travelled to Qatar for negotiations. There they signed the Doha Agreement on May 21, 2008, putting an end to the 18 months of crisis. It granted veto powers to the opposition, confirming the centrality of undemocratic consensus in the system, opening the door for repetitive conflict and future deadlock and raising questions about the constitutional legitimacy of the agreement.

### **Consensus versus peacebuilding: Falling in the communal corruption trap**

It is quite easy to draw a comparison between the situation that led to the Taef and Doha Agreements. The same dynamics and elements were at play during the Taef negotiations as those which drove Doha. Political deadlock, the presence of communal groups and mini-states, the internationalisation of the political, economic, and social affairs of the country – these factors all culminated in street violence which demanded political settlement.

While analysing the pre-Taef and pre-Doha situations, an important question comes to our minds: what went wrong in the implementation or even the formulation of the Taef Agreement, so that a decade and a half after reaching the first agreement, Lebanon again faced a political stalemate and once more needed a major agreement? Both the Taef and the Doha Agreements were reached through consensus among all factions, emphasising “... confessional compromise and inter-communal cooperation”. In the implementation of both agreements power sharing has be-

*A woman who stayed throughout the Israel-Lebanon war in summer 2006 speaks about the cluster bombs that are still strewn around her home in Nagoura.*



UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

come an end in itself, leaving no space for the introduction of reforms. Moreover, the question of nation-building, which would have a longer-term effect on stability in Lebanon, has never been considered. Still today, anguish remains among the different factions.

The agreements have brought a direct, rigid solution to Lebanon, where warlords, elites and wealthy businessmen, have shared power amongst each other, and have been unable to integrate the non-traditional interest groups and parties into the system. The agreements have accordingly institutionalised confessionalism and protectionism as an eminent feature of the Lebanese state. Both agreements have engendered competition for state resources among the elites in power, safeguarding and promoting the interests of their respective communities, resulting in internal networks of patronage. These elites have involved themselves in a rent-seeking game to control institutions and the political scene in general. This form of elitist organisation has led the state to disintegrate even while implementing the “peace” agreements. Lebanon, thus, finds itself trapped in a vicious cycle where national consensus has demonstrably failed, and where corruption has been at the same time a cause and a consequence of political conflict.

### **Towards a governance friendly peace agreement**

This article clearly shows how the formula of power sharing, which in the immediate aftermath of escalation of violence has been considered as a conflict resolution tool, has not at all promoted long-term peace in Lebanon. On the contrary, the peace agreements have reinforced the concept of commu-

nal corruption leading to the “Lebanese Entrapment”.

The experience of Lebanon serves as a useful case for other countries that are negotiating peace agreements after communal violence. Although no one doubts the need to find quick solutions to civil wars, integrating concepts of good governance and rule of law into the agreements will help to build and strengthen peace, ensuring stability and prosperity in the long run. And as the Lebanese case shows, the lack of such measures provides ammunition for the resumption of violence in the future, even following years of apparent peace. 🌿

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1 Khalil Gebara, *Reconstruction Survey: The Political Economy of Corruption in Post-War Lebanon*, (Tiri: London; LTA: Beirut. 2007), 17.

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3 This statement was referring to the Taef Agreement, but can also be applied to the Doha Agreement: Marie-Joelle Zahar, “Power Sharing in Lebanon: Foreign protectors, domestic peace, and democratic failure,” in *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, ed. by Philip G. Roeder and Donald S. Rothchild, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, October 2005).

*In Colombia, illegal armed groups involved in the narcotics trade have been colluding with elected political officials in a system known as 'parapolitics'. Such corrupt arrangements have exacerbated the internal armed conflict in Colombia. This article argues peacebuilders should understand corruption's role in the conflict as they work to reduce violence in the region.*

# Grand corruption in Colombia's 'parapolitics'

Daniel Friedman

In 2006, a laptop belonging to a paramilitary warlord was seized by the Colombian government. Even in a country plagued by more than four decades of continuous war, its contents were startling and troubling. In addition to revealing information regarding more than 500 murders and political assassinations, the computer's files revealed widespread collusion between high-level government officials and illegal armed groups. Despite the fact that low-level corruption in Colombia is relatively rare, the corruption of high ranking public officials is a major problem. In particular the phenomenon known as 'parapolitics' has resulted in long-term corrupt relationships formed between government leaders and illegal armed groups. Understanding the nature of this corrupt pattern is critical to successfully implementing peacebuilding, democratic governance, and anti-corruption programmes in the nation.

Colombia has tragically experienced internal strife and violence for much of its history. The current conflict dates back more than four decades and involves fighting between the government, leftist guerrillas from the FARC<sup>1</sup> and ELN<sup>2</sup>, and various right-wing paramilitaries. The relative ease of coca farming, when coupled with Colombia's difficult terrain and chronic political instability has led to the nation's emergence as the world's principal cocaine producer and exporter. Narcotics trafficking is one of the principal methods used by the illegal armed groups to finance themselves and is at the source of much of the country's corruption.

## Defining the problem

This article will utilise the definition of corruption most frequently cited by Colombian jurists and anti-corruption practitioners, which is "behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a

public role (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains."<sup>3</sup> While Colombians almost universally view corruption according to this definition as morally wrong, surveys of Colombian citizens indicate that many view such acts as 'inevitable'<sup>4</sup> or relatively unimportant in comparison to other crimes.<sup>5</sup> In other words, while Colombians will almost universally condemn corruption, they are somewhat inclined to tolerate it.

This view of corruption has the potential to reduce enthusiasm or co-operation with any anti-corruption strategy and needs to be taken into consideration. Writing on the subject, the former Colombian Minister of Justice said, "It is essential [for Colombians]... to reject the idea that [corruption] is an inevitable condition to which we are all condemned."<sup>6</sup> Cultivating this rejection, however, is a major challenge. Not surprisingly, the conflict is often cited as Colombians' chief concern when surveyed, well above corruption. As a result, any programme which actively shows the link between corruption and the conflict is likely to meet with greater levels of public support.

## An unusual pattern

Corruption in Colombia occurs disproportionately at the highest levels of government, while [petty] corruption is perceived to be relatively rare. For example, less than three percent of Colombians report ever being asked for a bribe by a police officer or public inspector.<sup>7</sup> Colombian public services and low-ranking officials have among the lowest perceived corruption rates in Latin America.<sup>8</sup>

Conversely, high-level officials and institutions appear to be the most susceptible to corruption. Within the Colombian context this is logical, as only

those with a great degree of authority have the power to divert resources, change government policies or pass laws in a way that will substantively benefit narcotics traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitaries. Most reported instances of corruption typically involve powerful legislators, judges and military officials, and accusations are usually tied to the conflict and narcotics trade.<sup>9</sup>

It is also worth noting that while the Colombian government is rife with corruption at high levels, the institutions themselves remain intact. No "shadow state" has emerged like those seen in portions of sub-Saharan Africa where the government has become so corrupt and debilitated that official institutions cannot function or an institution in its entirety is used for the personal benefits of the authorities.<sup>10</sup> Many high level officials carry out their duties diligently and the government as a whole is generally deemed to be at least functional on a basic level despite high levels of corruption. Institutions still work largely, albeit inefficiently, towards their designated purposes.

## Parapolitics

High-level corruption in Colombia frequently appears in 'conventional' forms, where public officials are paid bribes for illegal acts on an individual basis. For example, naval officials have received bribes to divert patrols away from drug trafficking routes,<sup>11</sup> and investigators have been paid to close cases against leaders of illegal armed groups.<sup>12</sup> However, in 2006 the 'parapolitics' scandal revealed the existence of a somewhat unusual and particularly troubling form of corruption.

The term 'parapolitics' describes the ongoing, long-term collusion between elected political officials and illegal armed groups involved in the conflict.<sup>13</sup> Unlike more conventional forms of cor-

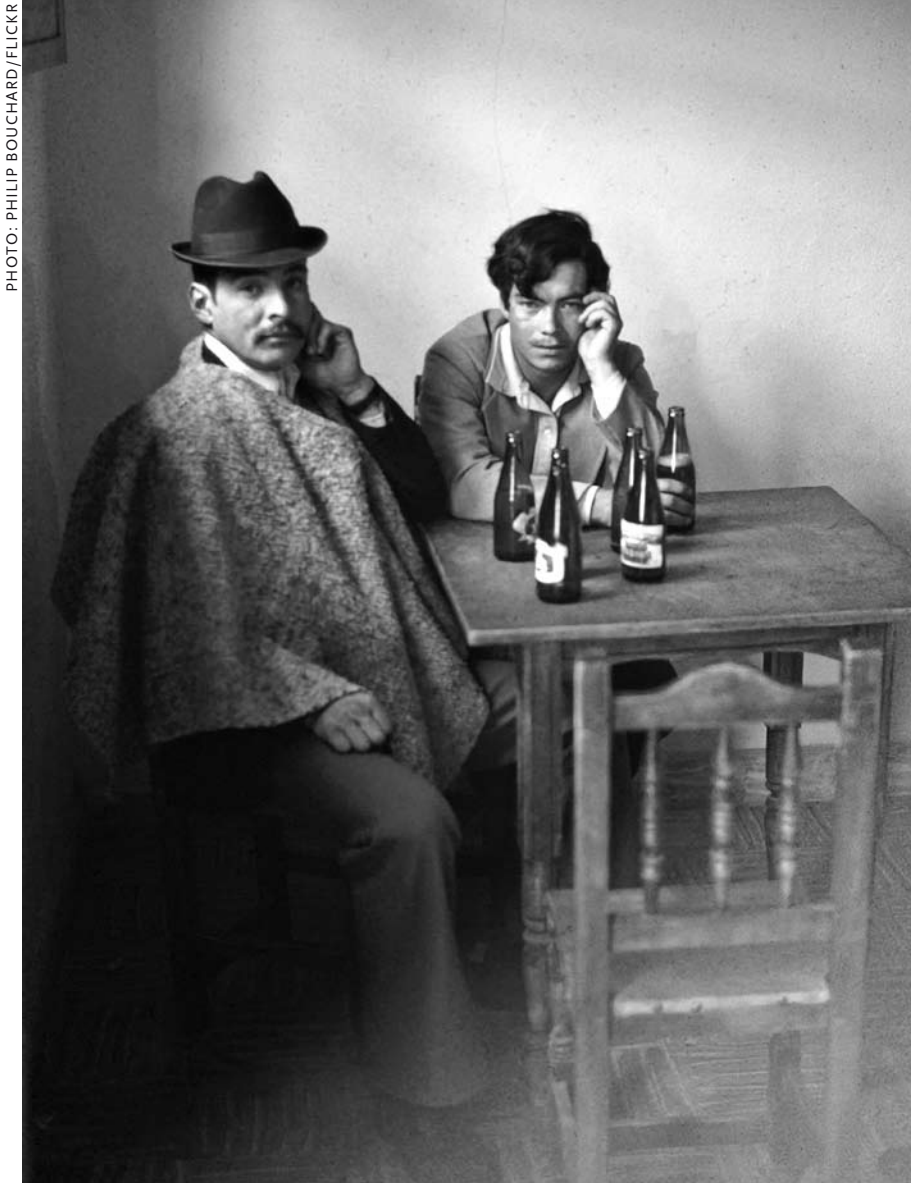


PHOTO: PHILIP BOUCHARD/FICKR

*Two men spending the afternoon in a bar in Subachoque, a small town in the western suburbs of Bogotá, Colombia. Since four decades the country is plagued by conflict and corruption.*

ruption, parapolitical corruption is a long-term relationship and involves the systematic abuse of authority by a political official to benefit armed groups. While the scandal has only reached the front pages in the past few years, some of these corrupt relationships appear to have existed for decades.

Alliances between politicians and armed groups may exist for a variety of reasons. Armed groups have used bribery, campaign contributions, offers of private protection, and threats of violence to co-opt public officials. Ideological sympathies may also play a role. It is interesting to note that many politicians who have supported an armed group said that they did so out of a genuine conviction that it was best for the country. Corrupt politicians aiding the right-wing paramilitaries may not

have aided the guerrillas under similar circumstances and vice-versa. However, as these alliances almost always feature some type of material benefit for the officials involved, they still must be viewed as a form of corruption.

A Colombian cultural inclination towards bureaucracy and documentation has made the corrupt linkages between elected officials and armed groups startlingly clear. Politicians have signed lengthy contracts with guerrilla and paramilitary commanders stating their allegiance to the armed group, detailing the type of support the official is to offer the armed group and the benefits to be provided to the politician in exchange for their corrupt behaviour. In particularly flagrant cases, paramilitaries have financed aspiring politicians' campaigns, threatened locals with violence

in exchange for votes, assassinated rival candidates and provided officials with armed protection in exchange for years of political favours.<sup>14</sup>

Parapolitics has been revealed to be shockingly widespread. A former militia leader once famously bragged that a third of the entire national congress had been elected with paramilitary support.<sup>15</sup> Since the scandal first broke in 2006, hundreds of executive officials, national congressmen, mayors and municipal councilmen have been implicated.

### **Working to break the cycle**

As one analyst explained, parapolitics "goes well beyond the problem of corruption".<sup>16</sup> The intersection of corruption and conflict is undeniably exacerbating and prolonging the violence in Colombia. The government's otherwise successful efforts to crack down on illegal armed groups are directly undermined by corrupt officials who support them. Corruption allows armed groups the opportunity to increase their revenues through drug trafficking and money laundering while evading prosecution. Parapolitics in particular allows many illegal actors to operate with impunity. The corrupt relationships can be deadly. Entire villages have been massacred with the support of corrupted local leaders.<sup>17</sup> This linkage makes effective anti-corruption strategies an essential part of peacebuilding in the region. Anti-corruption programmes will not only serve to reduce corruption as a societal ill, but will help to eliminate a major factor fuelling the conflict.

The phenomenon of parapolitics also provides lessons and warnings to any organisation working to implement democratic governance and peacebuilding programmes in Colombia. Even if they choose not to directly engage in anti-corruption work, they should still be aware of corruption's effect on the conflict, especially as NGOs are increasingly choosing to work with politicians at the grassroots and municipal levels of government. While these partnerships are theoretically beneficial to the peacebuilding effort, the high numbers of municipal officials implicated in the parapolitics scandal requires careful stakeholder analysis and vetting prior to establishing relationships with politicians. Parapolitics should also serve as a warning of the risks inherent to anti-corruption programming in the region. NGOs, reporters and government em-

ployees working to expose corruption have received death threats<sup>18</sup> and large numbers have been killed.<sup>19</sup>

The unique pattern of corruption in Colombia creates critical linkages between high ranking public officials and armed groups. It inherently ties corruption to the conflict and feeds the violence. In light of this, the potential risks and benefits of anti-corruption work, especially as it relates to building peace in Colombia, are too great to be ignored. 🌿

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1 *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)

2 *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army)

3 Nye, J.S.: "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis." In *American Political Science Review*, vol. 61, no.2. American Political Science Association (APSA). Washington, DC. June 1967

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13 The term derives from shortening the phrase 'paramilitary politics.' While the term's namesake comes from the paramilitaries and most instances of parapolitics still revolve around these militias, a number of similar examples have emerged involving guerilla groups. This type of corruption has been labeled 'FARC-politics' or 'guerrilla politics' by the Colombian media. Within this article, however, parapolitics refers to ongoing collusion between public officials and any illegal armed group.

14 Otis, John. "Colombia Election: Many Candidates Puppets of Militias." *Houston Chronicle*. Houston, Texas. March 10, 2006

15 Webb, Jason. "Colombia warlords testify about Congress 'friends'." *Reuters*. New York. August 4, 2005

16 Pecaut, Daniel. *Las FARC: Una Guerrilla Sin Fin o Sin Fines?* Grupo Editorial Norma. Bogotá, Colombia. 2008. p. 176

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*The winding roads and the mountainous landscape of Colombia make it difficult for authorities to keep track of smugglers and rebels.*



PHOTO: PHILIP BOUCHARD/FICKR

*Corruption is a toxic weed that grows in numerous places within a corrupt military. Of the numerous negative consequences that results, the extension of the duration of conflicts is a critical issue to consider for peacebuilders.*

## Corrupted militaries: Criminality, conflict, and coercion

Matt Herbert

Military corruption presents an overlooked yet daunting challenge to state security. Corruption exists to differing degrees within nearly every military organisation, though normally oversight bodies are able to keep such activity to a minimum. Yet, in situations of low state capacity, when civilian oversight and military accountability is weak, military corruption can become endemic. Widespread corruption can degrade a military's capabilities, rendering a state unable to field a force equipped with up-to-date weaponry or adequate supplies. Corruption can also directly impact the force's operational effectiveness, with bribery utilised as a tool by insurgents to escape government forces or gain valuable information. Finally, endemic or high-level corruption can lead to severe civil-military tension, resulting in out-of-control militaries cowing civilian governments, or seizing them all together.

This article will explore the nature of military corruption and its impact on intra-state conflict. The detrimental impact of military corruption on conflict cessation will be illustrated by the experience of the Philippines, where multiple ethnic and ideological insurgencies have festered for decades despite a strong materiel and manpower commitment by the government to defeat them. While the causes of this failure are varied, endemic corruption within the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has played a key role. Corruption has also increased tension between the AFP and the Philippine Government, leading to several coups and attempted coups in recent decades. These coups have increased societal instability, deterred foreign investment and contributed to the government's hesitancy to engage in rigorous oversight of the AFP.

### Categorising military corruption

Corruption, defined as "the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain",<sup>1</sup> can be broken down into two broad categories.

The first, termed "bureaucratic corruption", involves officials charged with implementing policy or delivering public services, engaging in corrupt acts in exchange for generally small-scale re-compensation.<sup>2</sup> Covering the majority of corruption within a military, bureaucratic corruption can be further sub-categorised as fraud, embezzlement or bribery. Fraud involves the manipulation by public officials of entrusted information or government material for private profit.<sup>3</sup> The most common type of fraud engaged in by corrupt military personnel involves the exploitation of the force's procurement and supply distribution systems. Embezzlement refers to the theft or diversion of government resources by those in a position of authority.<sup>4</sup> Finally, bribery involves the gifting of money, material or services to military personnel in order to achieve an otherwise unattainable, or difficult-to-attain, result.

Such low-level, low-stakes corruption contrasts with "political corruption". This second category involves high-stakes acts that are only achievable by individuals with significant connections or power within a society, such as military commanders or civilian defence chiefs, who have the power to alter policies and political systems to facilitate abuse.<sup>5</sup> Political corruption within a military can involve all sub-categories of activity described above. However, large-scale procurement fraud, involving actions taken to influence the awarding of military contracts or to otherwise interfere in the bidding process, appears to be the most common type of political corruption.

### Challenges to conflict cessation

Public corruption almost always impacts the effectiveness of the agency involved. However, the unique role of the military in securing the state assures that corruption within the military can

have a particularly severe effect on a nation's stability. Corruption lessens the military's ability to deter and to defeat insurgents. It also de-legitimises the military in the eyes of the local populace. Such a loss of legitimacy may impede the collection of information on insurgent activities from local civilians and reduce overall support for the military's presence. Rarely do corrupt military officials deliberately subvert their organisation; rather, their interest is in



***Corruption lessens the military's ability to deter and to defeat insurgents.***

financial gain. Nonetheless, corrupt acts are corrosive to a military's operational effectiveness. Their impact is well-illustrated by the challenges military corruption has posed to conflict cessation in the Philippines.

Procurement fraud has a toxic impact on a military's ability to prepare and supply its forces, as decisions on equipment procurement become guided by personal interest rather than operational utility. In the Philippines, procurement fraud has impeded attempts to modernise the military, leaving it with aging and increasingly obsolete equipment. Because political level procurement fraud affects decisions on national security strategy and on specific weapons programmes, corruption at this level can have a long-term impact on a military's basic capabilities. At the bureaucratic level, procurement fraud can seriously impact the efficiency and effectiveness of individual units. In the Philippines, commanders are known to collude with contractors in order to convert budgeted funds into liquid assets, resulting in equipment shortages on the front lines. Such shortages prevented government forces from achieving decisive victory, thereby lengthening the conflicts' duration.

Similarly, embezzlement by military personnel has a damaging effect on military operations. Embezzlement involves the diversion of funds by senior officers for private use or, more commonly, the sale of military material for private gain. The latter form of embezzlement often involves goods which are easily obtainable for officers and in high demand generally, such as weapons, ammunition or fuel. This problem is acute in the southern Philippines, where insurgent groups obtain much of their weaponry from army stockpiles.<sup>6</sup> Ready access to weaponry increases the operational abilities of insurgent groups and limits the availability of those same materials to front-line units. In the case of the Philippines, embezzlement of military

escape after attacks”.<sup>7</sup> One well-documented example involved a cornered group of Abu-Sayyaf militants and their hostages escaping when soldiers in one area of the perimeter were ordered away from their posts. The escape reportedly resulted from a financial agreement between AFP commanders and the insurgents to split the hostages’ ransom.<sup>8</sup> In the Philippines, the tactical use of corruption has thus given minimally capable insurgent groups the ability to attack high-value targets and survive government attacks.

Corruption also increases civil-military tensions, especially if the civilian government attempts to implement reform policies on a military riddled with high-level corruption. By threatening the vested interests of military commanders, government anti-corruption actions increase the chance of coups or the threat of coups in order to force a change in government policy. Yet, the potential for a coup may result in the military essentially “capturing” the state by blackmail, if not by force.


Finally, corruption within a military force can increase intra-force tensions, due both to unequal access to corruption profits and potentially due to attempts by some members of the military to report or end corrupt acts. Such intra-force tensions will decrease the force’s capability, while heightening the likelihood of the military splitting into competing groups.

### Conclusion

In theory, the military’s hierarchic nature should make corruption easy to combat through strong directives by commanders acting with integrity. However, when corruption becomes entrenched within a military organisation there may be a dearth of will to address the issue. In such situations the hierarchic structure can actually impede the reporting of corrupt acts by lower-level personnel, especially if their commanders are involved in the illicit activity.

The international community should focus on the minimisation of military corruption, not only because the abuse is a waste of public resources and a threat to proper governance of the state, but also for peacebuilding reasons. Simply put, military corruption impedes conflict cessation and therefore must be stopped. An analysis

of the forms and severity of military corruption should be undertaken in all active and post-conflict states. Agencies should build anti-corruption capacity, including through the development of laws offering clear definitions of corruption and corresponding deterrents. Such mandates should also affect international assistance, especially military assistance, and should be contingent on the implementation of anti-corruption programmes. In the most severe situations a wholesale reconstruction of the force should be considered.

Military corruption has a strongly negative impact on conflict cessation. It degrades the operational effectiveness of the military force, increases the relative power of insurgent groups and allows those same groups to escape government attempts to destroy them. There is a risk of corrupt military commanders developing self-interest in the continuation of the conflict, lessening the likelihood that they see winning as in their ultimate interest. Military corruption therefore presents a conflict trap, both resulting from and contributing to the emergence of countries in which conflict is endemic, government capacity is low and oversight is lax. It is an issue too potentially deleterious on conflict cessation and peace building to be ignored. 

## *There is a risk of corrupt military commanders developing self-interest in the continuation of the conflict.*

resources has closed the operational and tactical capabilities gap between insurgents and the military, reinforcing the stalemated nature of the conflict and increasing its duration.

### Corruption as conflict tactic

Although the motivation for most corruption is financial gain, in a minority of cases one actor employs corruption, usually bribery, to achieve a specific operational end. This can include accessing secure government areas, subverting government military operations or gaining access to otherwise secret information. In such cases the use of bribery to advance tactical or strategic victory for the insurgent group transforms corruption into a conflict tactic. The likelihood that it will be used as a tactic increases when insurgents are unable to win by forceful coercion, when conflict actors hope to create long-term relationships amongst themselves or when insurgents are pursuing goals other than control of governance in the area of conflict.

Insurgent groups in the Philippines frequently utilise corruption as a conflict tactic. The Philippine Government notes “armed groups buy off the police, military, and other officials to get access to targets of violence, and to ensure their

1 “Frequently Asked Questions: How Do You Define Corruption”, Transparency International, [http://www.transparency.org/news\\_room/faq/corruption\\_faq](http://www.transparency.org/news_room/faq/corruption_faq) (Accessed 17 September 2008)

2 *Ibid.*, 18-19

3 Jens Andvig, Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, Inge Amundsen, Tone Sissener, and Tina Soreide, *Research on Corruption, A Policy Oriented Survey*, (NORAD 2000), p. 16

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6 Hamish K. Wall, “The Dynamics of Small Arms Transfers in Southeast Asian Insurgencies”, (MA Thesis for University of Canterbury, 2006), p. 90

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*This article examines the governance challenge of according warlords positions in post-conflict governments. The presence of warlords in post-conflict governments may help stop the violence, but it poses sizable risks for corruption and, consequently, threatens long-term stability. The article explores several strategies for mitigating warlords' harmful influence in post-conflict states.*

## Warlords and corruption in post-conflict governments

Phyllis Dininio

In recent years, the international community has supported power-sharing arrangements to bring about an end to intrastate conflict. In lieu of decisive victories, negotiated settlements accord rival groups a place in government, which gives them both an inducement to lay down their arms and a stake in the post-conflict settlement. Such interim arrangements have brought rival groups together in governing coalitions in Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mali, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tajikistan, and Uganda, among others.

The joint exercise of power may achieve a reduction in violence, but can pose significant challenges for effective governance. For example, power sharing with mutual vetoes may erode the efficiency of government and increase the likelihood of decision-making deadlock. The arrangement also shuts other groups out, giving them an incentive to spoil the peace, and tends to exclude moderates from the governing coalition. A particularly risk-prone area is the access gained by warlords<sup>1</sup> to state resources, providing ample opportunities for them to enrich themselves through corruption. To use a common African metaphor, power-sharing arrangements give warlords a place at the table and guarantee their ability to 'eat' in exchange for peace.<sup>2</sup> These governance challenges can become a source of instability and contribute to renewed conflict.

This article examines the governance challenge of according warlords positions in post-conflict governments. While a peace imperative may justify their inclusion in government, erst-

while warlords are not typically the best qualified individuals to assume the challenging role of state building. They tend to have less education, less experience in government and less interest in pursuing a public agenda than other citizens. In many cases, succeeding as a warlord depends on ruthlessness in extracting resources from the population and maintaining authority among the combatants as much as skills in the battlefield or political arena.

Once in positions of power, these individuals predictably perform poorly.

In Afghanistan, for example, the decision to give warlords prominent jobs in the post-Bonn Agreement government has contributed to poor governance and rampant corruption.<sup>3</sup> In many cases, *jihadi* commanders replaced experienced staff with relatives and cronies, many of whom were illiterate, incompetent and corrupt.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in Liberia, the 2003 peace accords gave each of the three rival military forces control of five ministries, three state-owned enterprises and two autonomous state agencies. While this division secured a peace agreement, it led to looting of state resources on a scale that shocked even jaded international development practitioners.<sup>5</sup>

The very presence of corrupt warlords in government can impede standard approaches to fighting corruption. Efforts to increase transparency and accountability in public financial management, for example, depend on the political will of leaders to allow creation of transparent and competitive processes,

as well as disclosure of public records, media reporting on misdeeds, and investigation and prosecution of corrupt officials. Where powerful figures do not want to see such efforts succeed, they can use their influence to derail or redirect them at many junctures. They can circumvent prescribed processes, withhold public information, harass media outlets and journalists for investigative reporting, direct investigations against opponents and intimidate judges. In Liberia, for example, the National Transitional Government selectively targeted



***In Sierra Leone alone, legal diamond exports have increased to \$125 million in 2006, compared to almost none at the end of the 1990s.***

sanctions against economic criminal networks associated with the former leader's political party, leaving their own exploits unsanctioned. Activists involved in monitoring also face a security risk when challenging warlords' actions. Moreover, efforts to involve civil society in monitoring government officials and demanding accountability often face a daunting imbalance of power. The earlier conflict has weakened the capacity of civil society organisations, but strengthened the position of warlords.

### **Strategies for reducing corruption**

A few strategies can help reduce the risks of corruption where warlords are present in post-conflict government. These strategies include efforts to alter

the institutional framework for fighting corruption and those that aim to constrain the activities of individual warlords. The influence of international donors and industry in a country as well as the political capital of the president in comparison to warlords at a given point in time shape how relevant or effective any of these strategies might be.



**Warlords are not typically the best qualified individuals to assume the challenging role of state building.**

One strategy is to introduce more stringent international oversight, as was done under the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) in Liberia. In response to rampant corruption riddling the National Transitional Government, the donor community imposed a three-year programme to assert intrusive oversight over revenue collection and consolidate all deposits in a transparent manner into a single bank account in the Central Bank.<sup>6</sup> Starting in September 2005, the programme placed internationally recruited experts with co-signature authority in key ministries, agencies and state-owned enterprises with the twin tasks of rooting out corruption and helping to build administrative capacity. The programme has succeeded in stemming the massive looting of state resources that had occurred.

However, much of the success has also come as a result of the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf shortly after its launch. Upon taking office in January 2006, the new president dismissed all transitional political appointees in the Ministry of Finance and made a commitment to good governance and broader public sector reform. If warlords had still dominated the government, however, it is fair to speculate that GEMAP would have met more resistance. Even with a supportive president, calls for investigations by auditors and prosecutors have not often been addressed.

Another approach is to increase transparency in the markets for natural resources. International efforts to certify the non-corrupt origin of diamonds in the Kimberley Process and to publish company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initia-

tive (EITI) hold promise as a way to reduce the opportunity for hidden corruption on a massive scale. The Kimberley Process requires participating states to put in place national legislation and institutions, establish export, import and internal controls and commit to transparency and the exchange of statistical data in order to certify shipments of

rough diamonds as conflict-free. Companies operating in the 75 participating countries must have a Kimberley Process certificate to accompany their shipments of rough diamonds. The World Diamond Council, representing the diamond industry, and civil society organisations (currently Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada) contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Kimberley Process. Since its inception in 2003, the share of conflict diamonds in the international trade in diamonds has fallen from 15 per cent in the 1990s to less than one per cent. In Sierra Leone alone, legal diamond exports have increased to \$125 million in 2006, compared to almost none at the end of the 1990s.<sup>7</sup>

For its part, EITI requires governments to publish publicly accessible, comprehensive reports of all revenues and payments received from companies in oil, gas and mining. In addition, it requires the audit of all payments and revenues by an independent administrator applying international auditing standards, and publication of the administrator's opinion regarding their reconciliation including any discrepancies.<sup>8</sup> Initiatives such as these involve international companies and their shareholders and customers in the effort to hold government officials accountable for the sale of their country's natural resources. An international outcry around grand corruption in natural resources can provide a source of accountability that weakened domestic constituencies cannot.

**Transparent donor assistance**

A similar approach is to increase transparency and coordination of donor assistance. In post-conflict settings, information on aid flows is often difficult to obtain, enabling corrupt officials to divert donor funds to their own agendas. Initiatives like Publish What You Fund are working to promote transparency in

international aid.<sup>9</sup> Such campaigns enable donors, governments, local NGOs, and communities to track the flow of funds to various government offices, agencies, line ministries, and local governments. It provides a collective forum for identifying and responding to discrepancies between the expenditure and receipt of donor funds and thereby reduces the opportunity for corruption.

Other strategies selectively target individuals. The most aggressive strategy involves prosecuting notorious offenders for past war crimes or present engagement in corruption. While the most problematic warlords usually have records spanning both offenses, it is often easier to prosecute them for war crimes. For example, rebel warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was arrested in 2008 for war crimes, although he was also implicated in grand corruption during his tenure as vice-president in charge of Finance and Economy. This can unleash armed resistance by followers, so a careful consideration of the political situation is necessary before taking such a step. Indeed, the war crimes trial of Charles Taylor, rebel leader and former president of Liberia, was held in The Hague – far from his followers – for security reasons. Along similar lines, *Le Billion* suggests first driving a wedge between leaders and their main power base by enticing middle and low-ranking combatants to cooperate through amnesties and enticing demobilisation and reintegration packages.<sup>10</sup>

The prosecution approach also requires a functioning judicial system, the ability to use an international war crimes tribunal or the creation of hybrid courts with international capacity injected into the domestic legal system. Kosovo provides an example of the latter course. In 2000, weak capacity of the judiciary and the slow pace of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia prompted the United Nations Mission in Kosovo to set up tribunals staffed with international judges and prosecutors. These hybrid courts handled sensitive cases involving organised crime and corruption, which local judges were reluctant to try themselves, as well as those cases involving inter-ethnic conflicts, which raised concerns about bias. Most Kosovar Albanians accepted the presence of internationals in the judicial system as necessary to prevent intimidation and ensure impartiality.<sup>11</sup>



Buckets of gravel are washed and then inspected for rough diamonds in the Tongo Field, Sierra Leone. As the intrastate conflict raged, so did the illegal extraction of natural resources like diamonds. Natural resources facilitated the procurement of arms, prolonging the war.

A less risky measure is to remove the most egregious serious offenders from office, but not subject them to prosecution. President Johnson-Sirleaf's dismissal of political appointees in Liberia's Ministry of Finance is one example of this approach. Less risky still is the reassignment of warlords to different positions where they may have less of a power base, for instance by moving them from their region to the capital. By separating warlords from their networks of influence and their armed followers, this course of action lessens their capacity for predation. President Karzai's handling of Ishmael Khan, the former governor of Herat province in

Afghanistan and a powerful commander who fought both the Soviets and the Taliban, provides one example. Khan's refusal to turn customs tariffs over to the Kabul government and to maintain a personal army sparked a power struggle with Karzai in 2004, which led to Khan's dismissal. In recognition of Khan's continued influence, however, President Karzai appointed him as Minister of Energy in his cabinet.

### Conclusion

As this brief article shows, the presence of warlords in post-conflict governments may stop the violence, but it poses sizable risks for corruption and, consequently,

threatens long-term stability. High levels of corruption strike at the heart of the statebuilding imperative by undermining both the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state. The resulting state fragility makes the country vulnerable to recurrent violence, jeopardising immediate peacebuilding efforts as well as the longer-term peacebuilding agenda.

Where warlords can use intimidation to dispel demands for accountability by citizens or others in government, the international community needs to buttress domestic capacity for prevention, oversight and remedial action. Still, such measures should not replace efforts to develop domestic integrity systems that reduce opportunities for corruption, increase transparency and accountability, and foster coalitions in the long-term effort to promote good governance. Rather, strategies like those outlined in this article can provide some external support to protect the public purse from looting, giving reformers a chance to establish new systems for administering the state. 🌱

1 The term "warlord" here refers to military leaders who emerge to play a *de facto* political role.

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*Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has been active in both anti-corruption and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Liberia for many years. In this article, two senior staff members draw on SFCG's experiences in the field to describe approaches for implementing programmes aiming to improve governance and strengthen peace consolidation*

## Battling corruption in the search for peace: The Common Ground Approach

*Oscar Bloh and Ambrose James*

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, poor government communication strategies and the manipulation of access to information support exclusionary politics, while narrow and restrictive decision-making channels shroud public actions in secrecy, all of which paves the way for corruption and conflict. These practices have roots in the way both countries have historically been governed which exacerbated popular grievances and helped plant seeds for violent conflicts beginning in Liberia in 1989 and spreading to Sierra Leone in 1991.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG), an international NGO working to transform the way the world deals with conflict, has increased citizens' access to information in the management and utilisation of public funds, mainstreamed diverse voices in governance and reform processes, and modelled behaviours to ensure the long-term viability of the peace process. The following article outlines some tools that SFCG has used in post-conflict contexts in West Africa as a means of peace consolidation. It offers guiding principles for reflection for institutions and individuals working on anti-corruption and peacebuilding.

Liberia and Sierra Leone, like many other post-colonial African countries, inherited flawed governance institutions and a system of government based on the theory of unitary sovereignty. Within this political framework, power and political authority are heavily centralised and rest within the executive branch. This power structure privileges state officials with unlimited access to state resources, which they use to enhance a patron-client political system

that excludes a great portion of the population from access to decision-making processes and public resources. These factors act as a major source of intra-state conflicts across Africa, including Liberia and Sierra Leone.

As these conflicts raged, so did the illegal extraction of natural resources, subsequently lining the pockets of rich warlords and their supporters. In Liberia, combatants engaged in illegal harvesting of timber, rubber and gold, while in Sierra Leone, the illegal mining of precious stones was the common extractive. In both cases, natural resources facilitated the procurement of arms, prolonging the wars. Although these violent conflicts have ended, the unregulated and mismanaged extraction of natural resources could potentially fuel renewed violence. In this regard, strengthening accountability in the public sector, increasing transparency, and building an engaged civil society are key factors in maintaining peace.

### **Increasing access to public information**

Historically, citizens from Liberia and Sierra Leone have not experienced participatory governance. Lack of access to political decision-making processes or public information has resulted in the limited opportunity for citizens to actively engage in their country's government practices.

Access to credible and timely public information establishes the foundation for an informed, active citizenry to hold

public officials accountable for the allocation, utilisation and management of resources. Elections in 2004 and 2005 in Sierra Leone and Liberia, respectively, ushered in high expectations of development and service delivery, creating conflicts between citizens and authorities who could not deliver. However, the



**Part of SFCG's philosophy is that common ground must be established between the government, citizens and civil society.**

evolution of community radio in both countries has proven an integral platform in keeping the national rebuilding processes on track.

Community radio has the ability to mainstream the voices and concerns of ordinary people. This builds the base of societal knowledge, creating a more dynamic, engaged and representative public sphere. Community radio is therefore a key component in developing an inclusive, accountable and transparent relationship between citizens and government. To leverage this strength, SFCG has worked with communities and their radio stations to improve the organisational and programmatic capacity of community radios to provide information to citizens on government budget allocation and expenditure.

In Sierra Leone, SFCG uses media tools such as *Accountability Now*, a radio programme which strengthens government-to-constituent service delivery by

improving communication between the two sides around the issue of financial management of local councils. When the local councils were created in Sierra Leone, high expectations arose for development. However, many of these councils have not delivered results. This shortfall occurred partly because the local councils feel obliged to report to their donors as opposed to their constituents. However, their elusive approach and lack of transparency resulted in broader implications for peacebuilding. Even though laws required local councils to publish their income and expenditure statements, most local councils failed to comply, breeding mistrust and causing communities to demand clarification for their shortfalls in the redevelopment process.

In response to this problem, *Accountability Now* provides information on the income and expenditures of local councils, presenting their prepared financial statements with supporting analysis from a diversity of voices. Civil society groups have followed up on the broadcasts by visiting development locations to independently verify the quality and quantity of inputs matched to outputs. Thanks to the information publicised in *Accountability Now*, some councils taking part in corrupt practices have been exposed and unfit public officials terminated. *Accountability Now* has also mounted community pressure on councils to improve performance and explain their actions to constituents. By facilitating discussion within and between communities *Accountability Now* prompts more accountable and transparent behaviour by leaders and citizens alike. As communities begin to ask more informed questions about how their taxes are being spent and, in exercising this oversight, the community members grow more comfortable with paying their taxes.

### Mainstreaming citizens voices in governance

A second tool used by SFCG is townhall meetings, which provide a forum for discussion that brings together lawmakers, local authorities, civil society and citizens. Undertaken by SFCG in partnership with local civil society organisations, these forums are designed to open up dialogue on the utilisation of development funds allocated to local government and to build the relationship between civil society and local authorities. During these meetings, which

are broadcast live via radio, citizens can speak directly to their leaders and contribute to the decision-making process.

These platforms have stimulated the demand for better accountability of development funds and reduced the communication gaps between local government, citizens and civil society. In Sierra Leone, for example, townhall meetings on the progress made around basic service provision (such as food, roads and water supply) ensured the inclusion of diverse voices, bringing women, youth, civil society leaders face-to-face with government officials at all levels to engage in the monitoring of services. Each meeting covered the priorities and action plans of the councils, including the reading of the financial statements. This offered citizens the opportunity to review councillors' proposals, with time for discussion at the end.

It should be pointed out that these forums were in no way designed to be "name and shame" meetings. Part of SFCG's philosophy is that common ground must be established between the government, citizens and civil society to ensure the proper functioning of post-conflict societies. It was emphasised during these meetings that civil society has a role in encouraging government officials to enhance transparency and

accountability, and that this role need not be an adversarial engagement. In this regard, SFCG played a facilitating role; building trust into these forums



***In the absence of a space and mechanism to voice dissenting views and injustices, citizens resort to violence***

was critical to their success. Prior to each meeting, the facilitators met with the participating panellists to ensure that the format and agenda matched the interests and needs of the forum. These pre-meetings helped to ensure that the sessions were perceived as a safe forum for dialogue and would not be used in an adversarial way that might cause participants to withdraw from the activity.

### Modelling behaviours

While institutional change is essential for the consolidation of peace in West Africa, change at the personal and communal level is equally critical. Radio soap operas are a third tool that SFCG uses toward this end. Positive characters and scenes depicting honesty, accountability and transparency in the management of community funds offer new models of behaviour and leadership. The use of satire brings humour to otherwise sensitive subjects.



PHOTO: SFCG

*Citizens waiting in line to ask questions of their Senators and Representatives about development funding in Gbarnga, Liberia*



*A town hall meeting with lawmakers, civil society, and citizens in Gbarnga, Liberia*

In Liberia, SFCG produces a radio soap called *Today is not Tomorrow* (TNT). *The Independent Newspaper's* July 4th, 2007 edition referred to TNT as the best drama dealing with corruption in Liberia. The storyline depicts a negative character using his political connections and wealth to mismanage the community development funds. Through a community audit the report

*"What I have learned from the series of dramas that I have listened to is change in mind, change in attitude. The drama has taught me that there should be a change in the way we handle positions, projects and central funds now from the way we used to handle them in the past. That is to do away with corruption and work hard to build our nation."*

Focus Group Participant, Internal Assessment, of TNT, 2008

finds that he has embezzled a large portion of the money. The community demands that he goes to court where he is found guilty and given a ten-year sentence – a surprising outcome, as punishment for such corrupt acts is new to these communities. In a 2008 internal assessment, both men and women interviewed agreed that the issues covered in TNT are extraordinarily relevant to their lives and have taught them to deal with these issues in a more constructive manner.

Most participants relayed that they now understand the dynamics of corruption more clearly and this has impacted the way in which they have engaged with their communities. One man shared that when elected chairman of the community, he chose not to engage in corruption largely because of what he learned from the drama. Other stated impacts include women receiving more respect from men, greater acceptance of marginalised groups, increased youth participation in community decision-making and more accountability among local authorities.

### **Lessons learned/Guiding principles**

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia are fragile states, and access to the information that the government uses to make key decisions, while much improved through a diversified media landscape, remains constricted. SFCG strives to provide access to information to stimulate broader participation in decision-making.

Experience in both countries has shown that the narrow channel of representation and communication has created a situation ripe for social exclusion, as well as a political environment in which the resolution of grievances has proven difficult. In the absence of a space and mechanism to voice dissenting views and injustices, citizens resort to violence. SFCG has applied the following principles to guide its anti-corruption interventions:

#### *1. Managing expectations*

Without serving as a mouth-piece for the government, SFCG's media products convey messages that manage expectations in terms of the challenges

that anti-corruption interventions are faced with, as well as the role and responsibilities of citizens in combating corruption. To ensure that SFCG is not a mouth-piece, media products intentionally reflect a diversity of voices including government, civil society and members of the community from different parts of the country.

#### 2. *Maintaining neutrality*

SFCG remains neutral in the conflicts and dynamics surrounding corruption. Rather than taking sides SFCG seeks to encourage and enhance ongoing conversations by mainstreaming the many different and oftentimes marginalised voices in society. In post-conflict contexts that are highly polarised and divided along ethnic and party lines, maintaining neutrality is critical as it lends the moral authority to organise and convene diverse actors to talk about sensitive issues dealing with corruption.

#### 3. *Creating the demand side of governance*

After violent conflicts, there is a general consensus among citizens, calling for change so they might enjoy the dividends of peace. At the same time, there often exists a disconnect between the desire for change and how that change is supposed to come about. In response to this gap, SFCG seeks to build a critical mass of diverse actors with the requisite skills to demand better governance and accountability. This is achieved through the integration of outreach programmes such as facilitating town hall meetings that are linked to the media.

#### 4. *Building alliances from within*

While there may be resistance to change, there are always individuals who, despite being part of the system, will desire and work for change. SFCG identifies such people and strategically engages them around key issues of accountability and transparency. Leveraging their influence and contacts, SFCG can access critical information and maintain a status as a neutral actor as compared to those who would resist change and maintain the status quo.

#### 5. *Gender-sensitivity*

Corruption and the mismanagement of resources is gender neutral, but interventions addressing corruption need to be gender-sensitive, reporting equally on the involvement of men and women in corrupt practices that misdirect re-

sources, subsequently undermining efforts towards achieving and maintaining peace. Likewise, the voice and input of women on issues dealing with corruption should carry equal weight and command the same influence as men on this important social issue. The public platforms and mechanisms for addressing such issues exist for all citizens to take up issues of corruption with their leaders, irrespective of their gender. Equally, those leaders should have the opportunity to respond, and should do so with proportionate concern for issues raised by both men and women.

### Challenges

#### 1. *Capturing results*

Showing the direct correlation between citizens' access to information and their demand for good governance, particularly on anti-corruption issues, continues to act as an ongoing challenge. Developing a system to monitor and document the results of strategic communication in a systematic way remains imperative, particularly given that the inability to show results serves as a disincentive for making further demands.

#### 2. *Translating knowledge into action*

Where individuals and communities lack accountability in governance, the objective is to provide them with the skills necessary for translating information into action. Yet, in a poverty-stricken environment where people live day-to-day, commitment to a higher level of engagement often proves challenging.

#### 3. *Strengthening the supply side of governance*

The demand for good governance goes hand-in-hand with the ability and political will of the government to respond. Because political elites largely benefit from unjust economic and social structures, convincing them that their long-term political survival depends on participatory and accountable leadership requires a shift in mind-set that often takes time.

#### 4. *One size does not fit all*

While SFCG's approach has been to broaden the channel of communication and representation in decision-making processes, one size does not fit all. How communities conceptualise and prac-


tice representation should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### 5. *Understanding social dynamics in information generation*

The way in which information is generated and communicated is integrally tied to the social and cultural dynamics of a community. While radio has proven to be an important channel for information dissemination, understanding the social dynamics of information processing and utilisation is becoming a growing challenge for development communicators.

### Conclusion

Ensuring structures and systems that support trust, accountability and transparency in governance is fundamental in the peacebuilding process. When violence subsides, the focus is normally on addressing the immediate problems that led to the war or could promote a relapse into conflict. However, the issues of access to information, collaborative voices in inclusive decision-making and respect for human rights are the hallmarks of enduring peacebuilding.

Effective service and information delivery mechanisms are essential for two reasons: first, such mechanisms make the government as well as local leaders more credible in the eyes of their constituents. Secondly, it also helps to mobilise support from the constituents for their government once they know that these services are reaching them in a transparent and accountable manner. By bringing these to the foreground through a focus on accountability and transparency the rule of law will build and reinvigorate civil society to mobilize a healthy relationship with government for development. 

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*How might the best practices of peacebuilding be applied to anti-corruption? Based on interviews with trainers and staff of the Burundi Leadership Training Programme (BLTP) of the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, this article explores possible answers to that question in light of a successful peacebuilding effort. The author also flags ideas for future projects and research at the nexus of the two fields.*

## Peacebuilding and anti-corruption: Room for collaboration?

Amy Margolies

On June 9, 2009, an article in *The New York Times* documented the failure of anti-corruption initiatives in Africa.<sup>1</sup> Given this grim state of affairs, it is perhaps a suitable moment to explore new directions for praxis. Although in theory convergences may be drawn between peacebuilding and anti-corruption, the practical implications of these connections have not been fully explored. This article examines pragmatic intersections in programming based on interviews with practitioners. The trainers and staff of the Burundi Leadership Training Programme (BLTP), a well-established peacebuilding initiative, commented on this emerging issue. While not specifically focused on anti-corruption, the BLTP provides a vantage point from which to examine the current relationship between the two fields, as well as to highlight areas for potential collaboration. In particular, it suggests how a peacebuilding model like that of the BLTP might be applied to the problem of corruption.

The BLTP was created in response to the need for increased capacities for collaboration, trust and communication among key stakeholders in Burundi. It is an initiative of the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, led by Howard Wolpe, Seven-term Congressman, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Presidential Special Envoy to Africa's Great Lakes Region. Along with Wolpe, Steven McDonald, Consulting Programme Director, and Elizabeth McClintock, Lead Trainer, were interviewed about the potential linkages between the BLTP peacebuilding and

conflict transformation programme and anti-corruption.

### Corruption and peacebuilding in Burundi

On August 28, 2000, the Arusha Peace Accords were signed by nineteen Burundian political parties, drawing to a close two and a half years of negotiations. However, Burundi returned to conflict soon thereafter, with organised violence continuing until 2006. Existing parties vied for influence, and armed rebel groups attempted to transform into political parties. A number of significant constituencies that were not signatories at Arusha returned to the bush to continue resistance. In response to the continued strife in Burundi, the Burundi Leadership Training Programme was launched in 2002 with funding from the World Bank and USAID's Office for Transition Initiatives. Subsequent funding for the programme was contributed by the European Commission as well as by the UK Department for International Development.

The BLTP directly engages key Burundian leaders in its trainings. Although the programme does not specifically address corruption, workshop participants often raise the subject as an important factor in stalling Burundi's political transition. In the interview, Wolpe remarked, "In Burundi, corruption exists on all levels. The more visible and highly publicised instances of corruption have been government officials ripping off contractors. This is what captured public attention."<sup>2</sup> Corruption became a topic of discussion during and after the peace process. Over

the course of several years, Arusha delegates were paid hundreds of dollars in per diems for their participation in the peace accords – a system perceived by many Burundians as corrupt. The cash windfall had a visible impact on the local economy. Today in Bujumbura, there is a neighbourhood called "Arusha Town" because of new homes built by delegates.

Payments for peace agreements are an example of the less-than-transparent ways in which corruption and peacebuilding intertwine. McClintock commented, "There is a very strong relationship between corruption and peacebuilding due to the corrosive nature of corruption on peace, and therefore on peacebuilding. [Corruption] undermines peoples' incentives to continue to participate in the process if they feel that the benefits are not equally distributed."<sup>3</sup> Short-term solutions, when not seen as part of a longer-term strategy, can lead to undermining of trust and motivation to work for the common good.

### The BLTP process

In contrast with the precedent set during the Arusha Accords, Wolpe and McDonald decided against per diems to ensure that participants were not attending workshops solely for financial gain. Although an allowance was provided to facilitate participants' travel and costs during the training, this amount was modest, breaking the local tradition. As McDonald noted, "It raised a few eyebrows from Burundians until they realised the seriousness of our intent."<sup>4</sup>

Instead, Wolpe and McDonald spent months building the groundwork for engagement. They interviewed stakeholders from all levels of society, including rebels, government officials and civil society groups. Those interviewed were given the criterion of selecting leaders that could shape the future of Burundi, for better or for worse. The BLTP aimed to balance Hutu and Tutsi, half from the political class and half from civil society, engaging hardliners as well as moderates. Among those selected were extremists and rumoured corrupt actors. Wolpe elaborated, "Every diplomatic colleague warned us not to include [them], saying they would undermine

“**In post-conflict societies, anti-corruption programmes may negatively affect peacebuilding efforts.**

the process.”<sup>5</sup> The challenges faced in participant selection reflect a familiar paradox in peacebuilding: those most critical to securing peace are often those with the greatest histories of abuse.

Despite the reputations of a handful of participants, Wolpe and McDonald insisted upon their involvement because Burundians cited them as key to the country's future. Wolpe and McDonald believe that the BLTP's workshops, based on interactive role-playing and simulation exercises, encouraged extremist actors to change their behaviour. Wolpe declared, "There was no one more dramatically transformed than a top general, who is now the principal champion for integration and reform."<sup>6</sup> In this manner, BLTP seeks to repair relationships between key actors, building trust and encouraging a mutual gains approach to problem solving.

### Conflict and anti-corruption

Corruption in the post-conflict environment thrives on political volatility, social disorder and economic chaos. Corruption also serves as a survival mechanism in contexts where the population cannot depend on consistent salaries, functioning markets or government services. In response, national governments, non-profits and multilateral institutions have created initiatives attempting to limit corruption.

Although there are many obstacles to fighting corruption, most observers

feel that political will is one of the most fundamental hurdles. If political leaders do not support an anti-corruption agenda, it is unlikely that measures to fight corruption will be successful. Furthermore, political will may be difficult to achieve if key actors themselves are engaged in corrupt activities. The question of state involve-

ment is of particular relevance during or after conflict, when stakeholders may attempt to achieve an agreement at any cost. The "corruption buying peace" phenomenon often occurs during peace processes, as intransigent actors may be enticed into participation with financial incentives.

As in peacebuilding, anti-corruption programmes take on a variety of forms, including punitive, preventative or ethics-based strategies.<sup>7</sup> Anti-corruption work may include efforts to curb the flow of illicit assets, prosecute embezzling politicians or educate the public. Peacebuilding, on the other hand, attempts to transform relationships or pursue reconciliation and through these means, addresses the issue of "political will".

By definition anti-corruption programmes are not strictly conflict-sen-

sitive, in that the potential positive and negative effects of activities in the conflict context have not been analysed. To the contrary, in post-conflict societies,

“**Corruption serves as a survival mechanism in contexts where the population cannot depend on consistent salaries.**

anti-corruption programmes may negatively affect peacebuilding efforts by disrupting patterns of corruption. For example, while removing corrupt actors from the political arena may seem a positive step in post-conflict governance, it may also disrupt peace processes or peacebuilding measures underway.

Locally driven processes are essential to develop legitimate anti-corruption measures. These interventions should be based on public perceptions of what types of corruption are detrimental in the particular society. The BLTP team are in agreement that corruption may only be addressed if desired by programme participants, supported by political will or a newfound appreciation of commonality among protagonists, and guided by local prerogatives rather than by donor priorities. As each region or country possesses distinct social, political and economic mores, the type, scope and intensity of corruption will also differ. McClintock comments, "It would go against cultural norms [in



PHOTO: ADAM COHN/FLICKE

Among the obstacles to fighting corruption, lack of political will is probably the most important. Especially in conflict situations, the state plays a crucial role in creating stability.

Burundi] to not help someone who has been arrested, particularly if that person is a relative. People cannot sacrifice the relationships they depend on, and furthermore, this is not considered corruption. In comparison, having to pay for a birth certificate is unacceptable, because that official is using the power of his/her office to enrich himself/herself in a way that is detrimental to the community.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, a fitting definition must integrate public perceptions of corruption, as well as the social norms and values that those perceptions arise from.

### **Programmatic links and integration**

As alluded to above, anti-corruption can be understood as an extension of peacebuilding, in that peacebuilding attempts to change the same conditions and attitudes that facilitate corruption. Wolpe views corruption as a symptom of divided societies where a winner-take-all mind-set is paramount, and success or survival must come at the expense of others. McDonald explains, “It is not so much a lack of political will but a fear of being excluded from power.” Wolpe adds, “To the extent that you can begin to alter that paradigm – to generate interdependence, and to recognise that collaboration can strengthen one’s own self-interest, you begin to impact the drivers of corruption.”<sup>9</sup> Likewise, the team believes that peacebuilding efforts that strengthen relationships and encourage social cohesion can be an essential component in fighting corruption.

Unsurprisingly, most practitioners see the potential for crossover in peacebuilding and anti-corruption in preventive rather than punitive action.

### ***The “corruption buying peace” phenomenon often occurs during peace processes.***

The BLTP team is no exception. Their workshops focus on skill- and relationship-building to prevent interpersonal conflict. The team sees the potential for this method to be applied to corruption. During trainings in Burundi, corruption in the military and police was often cited as a barrier to a more effective force, precluding the advancement of institutional goals. The team suggested the programme could provide skills on how to conduct a conversation on corruption in the forces. Consequently, the role the training could have in anti-corruption

work would be facilitative, rather than directive. McClintock elaborates, “The skills would enable people to prepare better strategies by communicating more effectively about how to combat corruption. These are enabling skills, not a solution to the problem.”<sup>10</sup>

While attendance at workshops does not guarantee skills will be used, such trainings may help to shift the zero-sum mindset of conflict to one of mutual gains. Trainings may encourage intransigent political actors to work together, and could stimulate political will to fight corruption. In this manner, educational or skill-based preventative initiatives may represent a first step in potentially integrating peacebuilding practice and anti-corruption. McClintock envisions a possible programme in Burundi, “To educate people about the Arusha Accords, and during elections, corruption could be part of an educational component of a peacebuilding programme.”<sup>11</sup>

Specialised trainings or dialogues focused on issues of corruption could be another practical meeting point between the two disciplines. Wolpe and McDonald are planning an initiative that would integrate anti-corruption and peacebuilding strategies in the former breakaway state of Katanga province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The province is situated within a mining region with a history of foreign resource exploitation and corruption. This new project would become a part of the peacebuilding work already being carried out in the DRC, which began in 2006 and was inspired by the BLTP. For the first time, this programme would bring together key Congolese political and national leaders with leading expatriate investors, in particular representatives from mining companies. Wolpe explains, “The process would create cohesive networks of stakeholders and would hopefully produce an agreement or collective effort to develop a more rationalised system of economic regulation and management.”<sup>12</sup>

This concept, drawn from previous work in the DRC, suggests a new model for combining strategies from peacebuilding and anti-corruption. These hybrid approaches could produce concrete outputs such as codes of conduct, social contracts or regulatory structures to staunch corruption. However, cor-

rupt actors may have little motivation to participate when financial incentives remain and in the absence of political pressure. Engagement with all stakeholders is clearly the difficult first step, though some companies have shown interest.

McDonald emphasises the importance of the initiative: “In Katanga resources are flowing across the borders without regulation or tariffs, so it is a critical issue in the conflict. This will be our testing ground of dealing with corruption as a cause of conflict.”<sup>13</sup> The programme would function as a vehicle by which people come together to dialogue and create solutions. In this manner, McClintock explains, “we would give them skills to talk about [corruption], and they would come up with the regulatory structure which would include some way to deal with corruption, or to combat it.”<sup>14</sup> The core concept would be to instil a broader definition of self-interest as being best pursued by taking into account the interests of others.

### **Challenges for monitoring and evaluation**

Definitions of corruption differ across cultures, making the establishment of a universal definition impossible and impractical. The lack of a common definition and the diversity of perceptions of corruption create obstacles to developing standardised monitoring and evaluation practices. Global indices of corruption may provide some guidance and means for broad comparison, but even among these measures there is great variety in the indicators used.

On the programme level, monitoring and evaluation of measures such as improved relationships and increased accountability is a complex and imperfect process. For example, the participation of extremist actors in workshops does not necessarily lead to behaviour change. While relationships developed through workshops may increase horizontal accountability among participants by encouraging collaborative behaviour, it is difficult to prove attribution. As McDonald explains, “Corruption occurs because of fear, insecurities and perceptions of others’ disadvantages. Building cohesion, collaboration and a sense of the common future, and creating common nationalism is as key to combating corruption as it is to fighting conflict.”<sup>15</sup> However, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the trainings on increasing feelings of accountability among participants.



AFP PHOTO/ESDRAS NDIKUMANA

The chief of Burundi's last active rebel group Agathon Rwasa raises his fist as he salutes a crowd moments before declaring on April 18, 2009 that he has renounced his movement's 'armed struggle' bringing to fruition a peace deal to end 13 years of civil war.

The question of evaluation remains a challenge for both initiatives that target corruption and peacebuilding through behaviour change and prevention, and thus will prove equally difficult for integrated programmes. Therefore, it will prove challenging to recognise success, and could likely complicate funding for these "unproved" methodologies.

### Future directions

The BLTP provides a perspective on the possibility of integrating the work of peacebuilders and those who fight corruption. In essence, mainstreaming anti-corruption into peacebuilding practice could suggest a more conflict-sensitive model for anti-corruption. Anti-corruption would benefit from a "do no harm" approach, and peacebuilding programmes could more directly address issues of corruption in conflict or post-conflict scenarios. In this manner, peacebuilding can inform anti-corruption and serve as a vehicle for integration on the programmatic level. Peacebuilding practices such as relationship-building, dialogue and a mutual gains approach may provide new skills and capacities for those who confront (or benefit from) corruption. These

stakeholders, in turn, possess the ability to influence political will, one of the greatest hurdles to fighting corruption.

However, the challenge to develop innovative ways to deal with the problem will remain as long as the causes and facilitating factors of corruption persist. Peacebuilders assume that political inclusion and collaboration create incentives for transparency, although the environmental factors that create opportunities for corruption may continue to exist, such as weak rule of law, ineffective institutions and a lack of regulation. The discussion with BLTP practitioners suggests that these factors can also be addressed through training to build collaborative capacity and trust, instil communications and joint problem solving skills, and create a culture of shared interests in state success. When the ability of individuals to work together is reinforced and sustained efforts are made to reach a common goal, then institutions and legal frameworks are strengthened. Therefore, practitioners might be able to take new directions that combine strategies from both fields that possess a potential to offer incentives for peace and transparency. En-

couraging collaboration and dialogue between practitioners from both fields can facilitate this process. All in all, the results remain to be seen and, of course, accurately measured. 🌱

- 1 Duggar, Cecilia. "Battle to Halt Graft Scourge in Africa Ebbs." *The New York Times*. June 9, 2009
- 2 Howard Wolpe, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009
- 3 Elizabeth McClintock, Personal Interview, June 23, 2009
- 4 Steven McDonald, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009
- 5 Howard Wolpe, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Jennett, Victoria. Transparency International, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center. 25 September, 2006
- 8 Elizabeth McClintock, Personal Interview, June 23, 2009
- 9 Howard Wolpe, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009
- 10 Elizabeth McClintock, Personal Interview, June 23, 2009
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Howard Wolpe, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009
- 13 Steven McDonald, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009
- 14 Elizabeth McClintock, Personal Interview, June 23, 2009
- 15 Steven McDonald, Personal Interview, June 9, 2009

*Though peacebuilding and anti-corruption share common aims, anti-corruption programmes are not by definition conflict-sensitive. It is recognised that while a comprehensive reform process supporting transparency and accountability is important, so too is violence prevention. This article suggests several central questions and concerns agencies should examine to better understand how their anti-corruption programmes can support or undermine peace.*

## Can fighting corruption harm building peace?

Corinna Kreidler

At first glance, the positive effects of anti-corruption work on peacebuilding seem obvious: anti-corruption work supports the quest for transparent, inclusive, accountable governance, both in the political and in the economic spheres. Peacebuilding, here defined as efforts to directly stop or prevent violent conflict, aims in the same direction of fostering human security, the rule of law and accountable leadership.

However, despite the positive connections, there can be (unintended) negative side effects when anti-corruption activities harm a peace process or peaceful coexistence by increasing sources of tension within a society or reducing factors that connect people across conflict lines. In order to analyse the interaction of anti-corruption work on and in a context of conflict, this article will use the “do no harm” framework developed by Mary B. Anderson and others.<sup>1</sup> The framework was initially applied to humanitarian work, but is used in this case as a tool to reflect on the conflict-sensitivity of anti-corruption work. Using the do no harm terminology, anti-corruption work can have a negative impact if it reduces connecting factors within a community in conflict or if it increases dividers (sources of tensions) and triggers of violence. On the other hand, it can have a positive impact if it works towards a reduction of dividing factors and is able to reinforce connecting ones.

One needs to underline that aid neither causes nor ends wars. Taking this as a given, it is still worthwhile to consider why incorporating conflict-sensitivity into anti-corruption work is essential. First, “although aid may be marginal when compared to the total resources devoted to wars, there is sufficient evidence showing its influence on the course of warfare that aid pro-

viders must take responsibility for its impacts.”<sup>2</sup> This applies to all types of aid delivered by outsiders in a context of conflict. A second argument relates directly to the nexus between corruption and conflict: Le Billion argues that conflict may arise from or be caused by changes in patterns of corruption rather than from corruption itself.<sup>3</sup> As anti-corruption work aims at changing these patterns, any serious impact will affect the evolution of the conflict.

A third argument demands that, especially in post-war societies, priority is given to those sectors that had driven the conflict, e.g. “conflict resources” such as minerals, diamonds or timber: “Where illegal exploitation or inequitable, unaccountable management of natural resources has been central to conflict dynamics, improved resource governance needs to be a central element of peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction strategies”<sup>4</sup> including anti-corruption work. Anti-corruption work in these sectors means focusing on entrenched patterns of corruption, on established actors with vested interests in the war economy for whom the post-conflict situation can represent a risk to their livelihood, power-base, identity and position in society.

### **The role of corruption within a conflict**

An aid agency starting an anti-corruption programme needs to carefully analyse the expression of corruption within the local context: What is locally perceived as an accepted “code of conduct” that is part of the existing political order and condoned by large parts of society? Where does the generally recognised le-

gitimate control of resources and power end – how far must one step beyond acceptable boundaries or fail to honour the rules of reciprocity? The aim of this historical as well as cultural contextualisation is to examine how corruption can act as a connecting factor ensuring a certain level of (temporary) political stability or allowing to “buy peace”. But it also serves to examine how corruption can act as a “divider” and cause or exacerbate tensions, especially if “resource control is orchestrated along social identity fault lines defining the sharp inequalities that fuel both grievances amongst marginalised groups and greed-drive jockeying within dominant ones”.<sup>5</sup> Aid agencies have an obligation to ensure that their intervention does not make a bad situation worse.



***Conflict may arise from or be caused by changes in patterns of corruption rather than from corruption itself.***

In many countries in conflict, the capture of the state is the main way to enrich oneself and govern over state resources. Those resources are often in high demand by outside economic actors, hence the profit at stake increases (e.g. the demand for Coltan fuelling the war in DRC).<sup>6</sup> Especially in countries where lootable resources and small weapons are abundant, wars become self-perpetuating and become the main livelihood of armed actors.<sup>7</sup>

But corruption can also be a connecting factor in a society where patronage networks ensure that some benefits are channeled down to poorer members of the community and where it ensures a

certain level of political stability and security.<sup>8</sup> If benefits of illicit practices are distributed amongst different and possibly antagonistic groups and regions, this can help to keep envy, grievances and discontent under control. Having the right “connections” can represent valuable social capital for poorer people and can allow them a certain degree of vertical mobility. This reduces the need to resort to violence to enrich themselves and allows new actors access to the political realm. Despite these positive effects of corruption, it is unsustainable and harmful to economic development in the long run<sup>9</sup> and should be fought in the interest of equity and justice. Otherwise, continuing inequity and injustice can in turn create new grievances, tensions and divisions within society, laying the groundwork for future conflict.

### Analysis of an anti-corruption aid programme

Conflict-sensitive anti-corruption programming should start with a reflection on the agency’s own culture with regards to transparency and accountability. It goes without saying that agencies need to lead by example and have to make sure

that their own staff and procedures adhere to highest ethical and moral standards. Impunity for aid workers caught for malpractice has to be taboo. A critical self-examination of the agency’s role in anti-corruption work should include the following questions:

- Do we practice what we preach?
- Are we seen as spoilers to the post-war honeymoon?
- Is our programme perceived as a new form of external interference and intrusion into local politics?<sup>10</sup>
- Are we going too far by automatically assuming that “corruption is everywhere” and “we need to control everything because we cannot trust these people”? Which message would that assumption send, especially if working with local partner organisations?
- Do we follow our own – mostly Western – perceptions of corruption or do we accept that there is a local “code of conduct” that differs from ours?
- Are we reinforcing a corrupt economy through our presence by inflating wages and prices while channelling

large amounts of resources into distorted local markets?

All of these questions and critical reflection also has to be applied to partner organisations or local counterpart organisations, e.g. national oversight bodies whose credibility is a key factor for successful anti-corruption reforms.

There is also a security aspect that needs to be taken into account: agency staff who are committed to active anti-corruption work can become threatened and targeted by people risking to lose sources of income or privileges. Agencies which pursue active anti-corruption measures need to protect their staff. Similarly, activists working for local partner organisations or media<sup>11</sup> involved in anti-corruption work need to be adequately protected.

### Key programming questions

When analysing a programme in order to establish its effects on the dividing as well as connecting aspects of corruption, the agency should ask key questions:

- With whom do we work?
- How do we work?
- What is the best timing?



PHOTO: ADAM COHN/FLICKR

*A diamond miner at the rim of one of the Tongo diamond mines in Sierra Leone. The mining techniques are artisanal, meaning machines are not employed, just shovels, picks, buckets, sieves and bare hands.*

*With whom do we work?*

In societies where mainly one group benefits from corruption, anti-corruption work can easily be seen as biased against that group. Exposure of their malpractice needs to be carefully balanced with general awareness-raising,

## **Having the right “connections” can represent valuable social capital for poorer people.**

e.g. education on corruption in schools or in the media. It is important to avoid being seen as part of a scapegoating process that could be a powerful trigger of new tensions or renewed violence.

Agencies should, to the extent possible, avoid working with people who have been symbols of corruption. Involving them in the programme can have a legitimisation effect. The agency also needs to prohibit would-be rulers from using the fight against corruption for political purposes, justifying violent action or use the opportunity for purges against opponents.

The focus should be on discrediting corrupt systems rather than persons. Transforming perceptions and stereotypes related to corruption that sustain conflict are another way of reducing a divider. This would help to reinforce the interest in “fair play” that connects many people in corrupt societies.

Anti-corruption measures could also disrupt social networks that used to con-

nect opposed groups. Common financial interests may discredit kinship as the predominant foundation for social capital and group identity. Militia commanders fear to lose their followers if they cannot financially reward them and fear illicit sources of income get plugged.

This will inevitably reduce their interest in peace. The threat of retroactive investigations could further de-incentivise powerful players to accept a peace deal.

Hence, in order to reduce dividing factors, aid agencies should look for ways to minimise the number of “losers” from a peace process and stay clear of those who have the potential to alienate more people than they are able to convince. They should find solutions for so-called “spoilers”. One suggestion is to disburse monitored financial support into the administrative and military structures of belligerents. These funds would help them effectively integrate into new governmental structures, thus increasing the opportunity costs to opt-out of the peace process. Broad-based ownership for the reform process that creates a feeling of pride and increases the perceived national prestige can reinforce connecting fac-

tors linked with a reduction of corruption. A conflict-sensitive anti-corruption programme should make everybody, citizens and leaders alike, feel that the programme is in his or her own best interest and that playing by the rules is worth it.

### **Anti-corruption tools and methods**

What would such a programme look like and how can it be conflict-sensitive?

In order to avoid exacerbating tensions, agencies should make sure that anti-corruption interventions do not lead to increased competition and criminality. In Afghanistan, for instance, efforts to reduce corruption associated with the opium trade led to increases in violence as corruption patterns shifted. Transforming the war economy into a peace economy is a key process, especially in societies where abundant natural resources were a major dividing

## **Agencies should, to the extent possible, avoid working with people who have been symbols of corruption.**

factor. Natural resource management strategies that benefit local communities and reduce disparities between groups are a strong instrument to reduce these dividers. Post-conflict anti-corruption work in the arms industry, meanwhile, is particularly difficult as it may threaten the industry directly by looking into their business transactions and indirectly by reducing the demand for their product.

Tools such as vetting processes need to be used carefully. Otherwise they can lead to an alienation of losers and a radicalisation of outsider groups as seen with members of the Ba’ath Party in Iraq. New rulers can abuse such a process to take revenge on former allies, using anti-corruption tools as a new weapon fighting an old war. Show trials can be manipulated in the same way. National or global initiatives can be perceived as a cover-up or a PR exercise of powerful politicians or private companies if law enforcement is weak.<sup>12</sup>

Public exposure of prominent cases in the ruling government could incite people to join an armed rebellion as putchists often use the existence of corrupt practices within a past government to justify a coup. It has also been argued



PHOTO: HAMOID/FICKR

*Coltan mining in the DRC. Export of coltan from the eastern DRC has been cited as helping to finance the present-day conflict in the country.*

that illicit enrichment in post-conflict societies keeps potential spoilers busy making money instead of focusing on restarting a war. This argument states that the peace process could be sabotaged if would-be spoilers unite in opposition to an anti-corruption reform that was seen as a means to stop this money flow. However, this trade-off poses a dif-

## **Anti-corruption work in post-conflict societies can cause negative effects if it imposes strict rules too early.**

ficult dilemma: it implies that allowing warlords to abuse the system for personal gain is the acceptable price to be paid to keep them quiet.

Mollifying local elites who are in a position to disrupt critical steps in a peace process might be a temporary tool, but it needs to be carefully balanced against the risk of losing credibility for the entire reform process. It may look like big fish go untouched while small ones are prosecuted. Amnesties may serve the same purpose, but they also run similar risks. Public exposure programmes such as “ending impunity” campaigns can be seen as culturally inappropriate, especially when driven by outsiders such as international media or NGOs. The connecting factor of national pride could be weakened through such a process.

Another strong connector can be the common belief in a quick and visible post-war recovery and a tangible peace dividend. Yet, economic benefits could be weakened by strong anti-corruption tools that deter investors’ interest in the country and slow down any visible improvements in the general living conditions. Especially a lack in better livelihood options for unemployed youth can make them easily recruitable again for the interests of a spoiler. If fighters have been promised a better future after the end of the war, the lack of personal benefits can make them bitter, potentially leading to violence and/or criminality.

*Timing: weighing short-term versus long-term gains and losses*

Anti-corruption work in post-conflict societies can cause negative effects if it imposes strict rules too early. This deprives the new rulers of the necessary means to retain control over key military and business forces, and it reduc-


es their capacity to “sell” a negotiated agreement. If launched before the new leadership has time to establish a post-war power base and before the state is able to deliver, disappointment with the lack of improvements in services by the state is inevitable. This will undermine the legitimacy of new political rulers and institutions, leading to a weaken-

ing of those institutions, a power vacuum and a loss of respect for the rule of law. Expectations might run high, and those who fought for social change

may feel disillusioned, betrayed by the slow progress.. They might decide that “playing by the rules” does not lead anywhere and taking up arms again is the only way to ensure their share of power and wealth.

### **Conclusions**

Should agencies continue doing anti-corruption work even if no immediate impact is visible or if the negative side effects seem dominant? According to a recent conference on the role of natural resources in fragile states,<sup>13</sup> staying involved is essential even in difficult cases.<sup>14</sup> “Do politics, not only technical capacity building” was one of the recommendations. Case studies could be one way of collecting more information for agencies to ensure “that their efforts do not undermine their broader goal of establishing legitimate institutions that help a society to peacefully resolve rival claims to power and resources and address societal grievances.”<sup>15</sup>

Agencies should align anti-corruption programmes with parallel processes to create legitimate political processes and institutions. By balancing political stability with ending corruption, such programmes can help to reinforce connecting factors that are essential to peacebuilding while avoiding a relapse into violence and ensuring a necessary minimum commitment to a comprehensive reform process fostering transparency and accountability. However, it is a hard choice if anti-corruption work is supposed to be “softened” in the interest of buying time and allowing powerful players to continue to enrich themselves even after the end of an armed conflict. Further research is necessary to determine when and for how long this price should be paid. 

1 Mary B. Anderson, *Do no Harm. How Aid Can Support Peace – or War*, Boulder 1999

2 *ibid.*, p. 68

3 Philippe Le Billion, *Buying Peace or Fuelling War. The Role of Corruption in Armed Conflicts*, in: *Journal of International Development* 15, 2003, pp 413-426. Le Billion cites the criminalisation and competitiveness of corruption in Yugoslavia in the 1990s as one example.

4 *Transforming War Economies: Challenges for Peacemaking and Peacebuilding*, Report of the 725th Wilton Park Conference, in association with the International Peace Academy, Wilton House, Sussex, 27-29 October 2003, p. 2. Global Witness makes a similar point with reference to Sierra Leone: [http://www.globalwitness.org/media\\_library\\_detail.php/587/en/peacebuilding\\_efforts\\_in\\_sierra\\_leone\\_must\\_address](http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/587/en/peacebuilding_efforts_in_sierra_leone_must_address)

5 Le Billion 2003, p. 417. A good example for this type of context is Burundi as described in Peter Uvin’s article in this volume.

6 [http://www.globalwitness.org/media\\_library\\_detail.php/353/en/conflict\\_resources\\_undermine\\_peacebuilding\\_as\\_war\\_](http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/353/en/conflict_resources_undermine_peacebuilding_as_war_)

7 An example in the 1990s was the RUF in Eastern Sierra Leone forcing kidnapped civilians to dig for diamonds, which its commanders then traded for military and financial support. Three senior ex-RUF leaders were found guilty of this crime by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in February 2009: [http://www.globalwitness.org/media\\_library\\_detail.php/723/en/leaders\\_of\\_diamond\\_fuelled\\_terror\\_campaign\\_convict](http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/723/en/leaders_of_diamond_fuelled_terror_campaign_convict)

8 Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works. Disorder as political instrument*, Indiana 1999

9 Paulo Mauro, *Corruption and Growth*, in: *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110, no. 3, August 1995

10 William Reno, *Anti-corruption Efforts in Liberia: Are they Aimed at the Right Targets?*, in: *International Peacekeeping* 15, June 2008, pp 387-404.

11 A very recent example is the murders of Lasantha Wickramatunga, killed in Sri Lanka at the beginning of 2009 as reported by Reporter Sans Frontières: <http://www.rsf.org/Outrage-at-fatal-shooting-of.html> and Transparency International: [http://www.transparency.org/news\\_room/latest\\_news/press\\_releases/2009/2009\\_01\\_09\\_sri\\_lanka\\_assassination](http://www.transparency.org/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2009/2009_01_09_sri_lanka_assassination)

12 Philippe Le Billion, *Fuelling War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflict*, *Adelphi Paper* 357, February 2003, p. 77

13 *The role of natural resources in fragile states*. Report of expert meeting held on 22nd April 2009 in the Hague, organised by niza and Cordaid.

14 In Chad, for instance, where the Worldbank withdrew from an oil extraction project due to bad governance and management of revenues, China took over and further reduced the civil society’s ability to monitor the impact of the extractive industry.

15 Dominik Zaum, Christine Cheng, *Corruption and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, The City University of New York, 2009

# Corruption and peacebuilding: Resource page

*This abridged list of anti-corruption organisations provides peacebuilding practitioners with an introduction to resources and contacts in the anti-corruption field.*

**Anti-corruption list-serve:** This *email list-service* is for anti-corruption scholars and practitioners who wish to participate in an interactive and practical forum on issues related to corruption in development. To join the list, go to <https://elist.tufts.edu/wws/info/anticorruption> and use the "Subscribe" link on the left, following the directions on the screen.

Fletcher's Institute for Human Security, The Nexus: Corruption, Conflict, and Peacebuilding, <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/corruptionconf/publications.html> : Held at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in the spring of 2007, the Nexus conference attracted many of the scholars featured in this edition of *New Routes*. Conference participants contributed thought pieces on intersections of corruption and conflict, which are available now on the website.

**Global Integrity**, <http://www.globalintegrity.org/> : Washington D.C.-based Global Integrity focuses on providing information and data on corruption and governance worldwide. Their Global Integrity Index provides country-level (and in a few instances, sub-country level) basis regarding laws and practices related to transparency, integrity, and accountability.

**Transparency International Secretariat**, <http://www.transparency.org/> The TI Secretariat in Berlin is the world's leading anti-corruption organisation. The Secretariat does not directly manage the National Chapters, but it does help to set the global agenda on corruption, in particular by providing support to local initiatives worldwide. The website is regularly updated with corruption-related news, manuals, reports, and indicators. In particular, the TI Sourcebook (<http://chapterzone.transparency.org/publications/sourcebook>) and the Anti-corruption Handbook ([http://chapterzone.transparency.org/policy\\_research/ach](http://chapterzone.transparency.org/policy_research/ach)) are excellent starting points for learning about corruption.

**Transparency International National Chapters** [http://chapterzone.transparency.org/regional\\_](http://chapterzone.transparency.org/regional_) pages: TI National Chapters (NC) are civil society organisations working at the local level in approxi-

mately 90 countries worldwide. Independent from the Secretariat in financing and management, NCs vary in size and influence, but contacting your local chapter is often the best way to get involved in local anticorruption efforts.

**Tiri**, <http://www.tiri.org/> :

Founded in 2003 and based in London, Tiri focuses on building integrity standards in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Still growing, Tiri has made a name for itself in the realm of anti-corruption for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

**U4**, <http://www.u4.no/>

The U4 Resource Centre seeks to support international bilateral donors in anti-corruption analysis and programming. U4 is operated by the Chr. Michelson Institute and is based in Bergen, Norway.

**UNDP Oslo Governance Centre**, <http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/index.html>

The Oslo Governance Centre has produced a number of practical reports on anti-corruption reform and use of indicators in development and conflict-afflicted settings.

**UNODC**, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/index.html>

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime is the UN agency seeking to assist states in the implementation of the 2002 UN Convention against Corruption. It provides some programme tools and data on country-level compliance. At present, 136 countries have become party to the convention.

**World Bank Anticorruption**, <http://go.worldbank.org/QYRWVXVH40>

The World Bank maintains a number of corruption-related programs, including its well-known set of Worldwide Governance Indicators, which include a measure for "Control of Corruption". Other programmes are best explored in depth at the national or sectoral level.

# LPI News

## PeaceNet meeting in Helsinki

In June 4-5, Life & Peace Institute (LPI) organised a PeaceNet meeting in Helsinki together with the Finn Church Aid (FCA) and Comité Catholique Contre la Faim et pour le Développement. The meeting was attended by a number of ecumenical Europe-based organisations working with peace and conflict transformation related issues. This year's panel discussion was entitled "Somalia – what can NGOs do to promote peace, reconciliation and stability?"

A keynote address was given by Pekka Haavisto, Member of Parliament and Finnish Envoy to the Horn of Africa and Sudan, which was followed by contributions from FCA, LPI and United Nations Development Programme among others. A document with 15 concrete action points was developed as an outcome of the panel discussion.



## EPLO General Assembly

LPI has participated in the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office's (EPLO) General Assembly May 28-29. EPLO is a platform for European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union. The General Assembly meetings are held bi-annually, and this time it was organised together with Spanish Toledo International Centre for Peace and therefore held in Madrid. The meeting discussed the work of EPLO, the working groups and upcoming priorities related to the Swedish and Spanish EU presidencies.



## Arms Transfers and Armed Violence

The 4th International Ecumenical conference on Arms Transfers and Armed Violence in Bogotá, Colombia, May 26-27, was organised by the four organisations behind the 'Gothenburg process' (LPI, The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, The Christian Council of Sweden and the Swedish Mission



PHOTO: LPI

*Finnish Member of Parliament Pekka Haavisto was one of the keynote speakers at the PeaceNet meeting in Helsinki.*



PHOTO: LPI

*Diego López Garrido, José Pérez Santos, Emilio Cassinello and John Bell at the EPLO General Assembly discussing contributions and synergies to the Spanish presidency of the EU.*

Council). The object of the conference was to look at arms transfers from different perspectives, but also discuss the role of faith based organisations. LPI's former Executive Director Peter Brune attended the conference.

The Gothenburg process is an ecumenical initiative gathering churches and church-related organisations around the issue of the arms trade. The process takes its point of departure in the ethical dimension of the production, trade and proliferation of military equipment.

## In memoriam

On July 10, LPI lost a highly appreciated and respected member of its staff when Séraphin Ngouma, LPI representative in Congo-Brazzaville, sadly and unexpectedly passed away in a heart attack.

Séraphin Ngouma has been a key person in LPI's work ever since LPI became involved in Congo Brazzaville in 2000. He was a member of the local Resource Group on Peace and Reconciliation, and due to his background in



*Séraphin Ngouma, former LPI representative in Congo-Brazzaville.*

diplomacy as well as his other qualities he was chosen to become the local LPI representative in 2001. Since 2007, he was the LPI representative in Congo-Brazzaville.

Séraphin Ngouma has been the driving force in developing as well as implementing LPI's programme in Congo-Brazzaville focused on strengthening local actors in their work for peace and reconciliation. His major achievements also reach beyond that: through his endless motivation and engagement for peace Séraphin Ngouma made a very

personal contribution to the work for lasting peace in Congo-Brazzaville.



### Staff changes

After 18 months leave of absence, working with the Lutheran World Federation/Department of World Service in Geneva, *Tore Samuelsson* is back as Communications Director at LPI Uppsala. *Malin Brenk* who has been Acting Communications Director during *Tore Samuelsson's* leave will stay on at LPI until the end of October as an Advisor

on LPI's Implementation Plan.

*Diego Galeano*, LPI Uppsala's intern from Argentina in summer and autumn 2009, works both within the Communications Unit and the Programme Unit. *Diego Galeano* has studied the Master Programme in International Humanitarian Action at Uppsala University.

*Charlotte Booth*, Programme Advisor, left LPI at the end of August after two years to work with Liberia Dujar Association in Stockholm, an organisation that works in rebuilding the education sector in Liberia.

*Catrin Rosquist* will stay on as Acting Executive Officer since *Ulla Vinterhav's* leave of absence has been prolonged until December 2009.

Since April this year *Lillemor Gustavsson* works part-time at LPI's Uppsala office assisting Finance Officer *Anna Björklund*.

Changes and financial limitations within the Ethiopia programme have unfortunately made it impossible to keep the position as Resident Representative in Ethiopia. The contract with *Christian Grassini* has therefore not been prolonged. The Ethiopia programme continues, but is now based in Uppsala. In LPI Bukavu *Sylvie Chakirwa* works as Administrator since the beginning of June. *Sylvie Chakirwa* has earlier worked with Save the Children UK in Bukavu.

## Reviews and resources

### Third party mediation and conflict prevention

*Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia: Third-party mediation in regional conflict.* Ed., *Jacob Bercovitch, Kwei-Bo Huang and Chung-Chian Teng.* Routledge 2008

*Anna Lindh Programme on Conflict Prevention: Third Parties and Conflict Prevention.* Eds, *Anders Mellbourn and Peter Walensteen.* Gidlunds 2008

How can third parties assist disputants in resolving conflict or preventing it from escalating? What characterises third parties and what methods do they employ? What is the responsibility of the international community to mediate conflicts?

The theme of third parties in conflict management is elaborated in the volumes *Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia* and *Third Parties and Conflict Prevention*. The former publication studies third party en-

agement in the East Asian context, with a special focus on the Taiwan-China case and the informal and non-coercive "ASEAN" (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) way of mediation, whereas the latter discusses conflict prevention undertaken by regional, global and non-governmental organisations, with emphasis on the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

The contributors to both books refer to the general conceptual framework on mediation and conflict prevention and the current research findings in the field, labelled by a rather positive approach to third party involvement in conflict management.

The principal difference between the publications lies in the analysis of the position and function of the third party mediator. *Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia* focuses on regional mediation and third parties that due to long-term interaction are connected to the

disputants in various ways. It puts emphasis on the use of informal mechanisms and unofficial peacekeeping activities alongside official diplomacy, and the significance of the third parties in fostering mutual trust between the contending parties.

The articles in this edition include examples of different kinds of third parties: states like China which has mediated between North Korea and US in the beginning of the 21st century, the US which has tried to promote status quo in the Taiwan Strait from the late 1980's until today, informal political actors and networks which have assisted policy makers in the normalisation of relations between Japan and China in the early 1970's, and organisations like ASEAN that has promoted peace and security in East Asia through preventive diplomacy, dialogue and confidence-building measures during several decades. The discussion on ASEAN also provides a critical perusal of its ability to function as a third party mediator, taking into account its limited mediation capacity in terms of legitimacy, enforcement and resources.

On the other hand, many contributors in *Third Parties and Conflict Prevention* call for a stronger third party engagement in international conflicts through better conflict management mechanisms defined by the international community, in particular the UN and the EU. However, it is argued that the organisational limitations of the UN – especially within the Security Council – decelerate its conflict prevention activity.

This edition also includes case studies on Iran, Lebanon, South Caucasus and West Africa in the 21st century, highlighting the need for the EU to develop its conflict management doctrines and instruments and, as a part of that, re-define the roles and responsibilities between the Council and the Commission to improve the effectiveness of its operations. One of the core arguments of the book is that the international community needs to coordinate conflict preventive measures and third party involvement in a more accurate manner, among others the participation of the so-called “good offices”, third parties that facilitate mediation between disputing parties but are not involved in direct peace negotiations.

Case studies on Aceh and East Timor illustrate how rather small NGOs can supply information and analytical assistance in peace negotiations and how a network of researchers can assist in a reconciliation process and facilitate dialogue between the contending groups.

*Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia* provides a much needed in-depth academic study on mediation in East Asia; it is a well-organised and detailed analysis, with focus on the Taiwan-China case. Unfortunately, it does not cover much of the third party involvement in the ongoing violent conflicts in other ASEAN member states.

*Third Parties and Conflict Prevention* presents an updated, critical study on the contemporary discussion of third party mediation in a global context, including material from primary sources. The first section examines general approaches to international security and conflict prevention, which is not exclusively dedicated to third party mediation in conflict management. Fortunately that pervades the subsequent parts of the book.

## Anti-apartheid struggle:

### Analytical honesty and self-critical reflections

*The ANC Underground in South Africa to 1976. A Social and Historical Study*, Raymond Suttner. Auckland Park: Jacana 2008

Raymond Suttner has been an African National Congress (ANC) underground activist while in academic employment at a South African university. The apartheid regime imprisoned him for his illegal political activities. When he was released, he had served the longest period in solitary confinement among all political prisoners. Under the democratically elected ANC government Suttner was a Member of Parliament and then an ambassador to Sweden, before he returned to academia. He is now professor at the University of South Africa.

His study is based on 54 interviews of ANC activists, who operated underground during the struggle days, both at home and in exile. The male dominance in the organised anti-colonial liberation movement is illustrated by the fact that only nine among the interviewed are women. But Suttner is far from insensitive when it comes to gender issues. He does not shy away from breaking taboos and disclosing what often remains known but not made public.

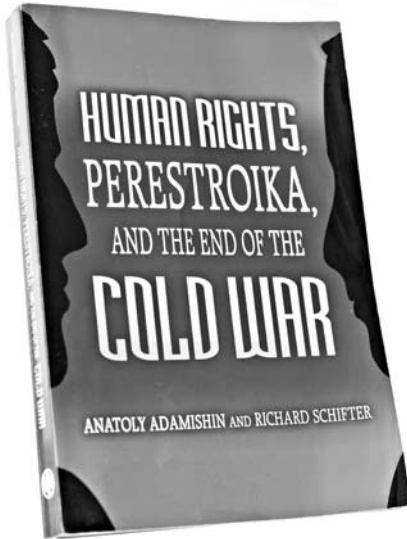
As he suggests, the liberation organisation represented a distinct notion of family (p. 142). There was a general suppression of ‘the personal’ in favour of ‘the collective’. Individual judgment (and thereby autonomy) was substituted by a collective decision from the leadership (p. 146). Such a “warrior culture, the militarist tradition”, according to Suttner (p. 119), “entailed not only heroic acts but also many cases of abuse and power” – not least over women. As Suttner concludes: “Any involvement in a revolution has an impact on conceptions of the personal. Given the overriding demands for sacrifice and loyalty to something greater than oneself, it leads invariably to a negation of intimacy” (p. 138). As so often, women in many instances – as mothers, wives and daughters, but not least also as objects for satisfying sexual desires – had the highest price to pay and had to sacrifice most. The limits to liberation and emancipation were maybe best documented already during the struggle through the gender relations and the abuse of women.

This book is personal and must have been the result of a painful process, which required, beyond analytical honesty, also self-critical reflections. Suttner in this way allows us to participate in a re-positioning of himself: “Some of the questions raised in the chapters that follow are ones I have not asked when I was actively engaged” (p. 15). For him, this is an attempt to document and explain a phase and also a species of the anti-apartheid struggle, which hitherto has hardly been made public (except through the selective individual biographical narratives of activists, who often leave out what Suttner brings to the fore).

His study interrogates many of these narratives and the historical experiences “as a pattern of social and political activity that has affected interpersonal relations and modes of conduct in society, including gender relations” (p. 15). By doing so, Suttner not only enriches the perspectives but adds precious insights and knowledge to a hitherto neglected, ignored or deliberately skewed presentation of sobering realities, which were part of a too often glorified and mystified era of resistance. This cannot have been

easy, but is even more so valuable and laudable as a kind of engagement required for coming to terms not only with the past but also with the present of liberation movements as governments.

*Henning Melber*



### Reflections from two former super powers

*Human Rights, Perestroika and the end of the Cold war, by Anatoly Adamishin and Richard Schifter. United States Institute of Peace, Washington, 2009*

Can Human Rights function as a lever to promote political change? The answer is yes, according to the two authors of a book about the dismantling of the Soviet Union as a political structure. The book covers a rather specific aspect of the Soviet-American negotiations preceding the end of the cold war. The American Assistant Secretary of State Richard Schifter and the Soviet counterpart Anatoly Adamishin give their respective views on the proceedings to downfall of the iron curtain twenty years ago.

A number of political leaders have written their memoirs about these historic years, though the form of this volume is somewhat different. The authors have written every second chapter and give their respective views on more or less the same time period and/or topics. The most obvious conclusion is that, although not much cherished in the Russian context, the real and outstanding hero is the last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev.

Ambassador Adamishin was a career diplomat that climbed the stairs of the system reaching the highest spheres in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. All through the years he positioned himself as a progressive force battling the conservative forces within the politburo and the party bureaucracy. Military perspectives/combatting the arms race, human rights abuses, international relations etc, are negotiated and discussed under the key words that we all learned – glasnost and perestroika. There are a number of useful concrete examples. At an internal discussion about a Dutch proposal on diminishing the nuclear warheads which he is supportive of, he is finally cut off by the then Foreign Minister: “Anatoly Leonidovich, stop it. There are such

economic, military and political interests involved here that you would not be allowed to do anything.” I guess the same arguments could be heard on the American side, though this is not accounted for in the book.

Richard Schifter has a different background. Being a lawyer trained on Human Rights issues he is asked to join the American delegation to different international conferences in the 1980’s, the decade in which all the important breakthroughs in the frozen relations between east and west took place. In the agenda described, the Americans have more narrow focus areas. The issue of the emigration of Jews to Israel is highlighted, as Secretary of State George Schultz specifically points out this is one of the major goals during his years in office. This campaign is also successful, to the extent that people from other ethnicities also start to claim Jewish background in order to get their exit visas. I cannot but reflect on the fact that while, of course, it is a human right to leave a country where you are oppressed, this cannot be used as an excuse to fuel conflicts and contribute to violations of human rights in other parts of the world, especially when considering where these immigrants have been directed to settle.

Another interesting aspect is what kind of approaches or strategies are most effective for reaching a change. Ambassador Adamishin is rather specific in his thinking: trying to achieve something is much easier from inside than becoming a dissident. There are a number of examples in which the Americans push for the political rights of individuals, like in the famous case of Andrei Sakharov, but are less concerned with social, economic and cultural rights. When it comes to human rights violations the Soviet representatives were keen on pointing out issues in the American policies that were violating human rights, like the death penalty of people under age. And in recent years one cannot refrain from thinking of the treatment of dissidents in Guantanamo, with clear similarities to the way the Soviet Union treated those who opposed the Communist world order.

Human rights were used as a lever to promote change and in this sense the book provides us with many useful examples of how non-military means can impact, simply a sort of soft power, and is from that point of view an encouraging example.

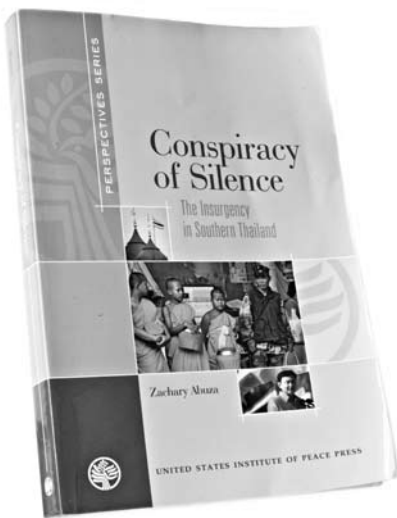
*Peter Brune*

### The brutality of a silenced conflict

*Conspiracy of Silence: The Insurgency in Southern Thailand, Zachary Abuza. Perspective Series, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, 2009*

For more than five years now, insurgents yet again haunt the southern region of Thailand, brutally killing hundreds of people every month. In January 2008, approximately 8,500 violent incidents had occurred and affected both Buddhists and Muslims. The societal impact of the many bombings, arson attacks and open slaughter has resulted in a total destruction of the social fabric, ethnic cleansing, non-existence of sufficient education, health care and severe economic hardship.

But who are behind these vicious attacks? And why? And more importantly, what do the insurgents demand?



What is the Thai government doing to end the violence? And what are the regional ramifications? To our distress, the nature of the insurgency has been little studied and thus created a lack of understanding in the international community of this conflict that is claimed to have “fundamentalist Islamic overtones and a degree of Islamic Jihadist violence” (p. 4.). This fact is not helped by the blunt silence of the insurgents when it comes to taking responsibility for the acts of violence and blaming other groups for them. No specific demands or goals have been articulated, at least not at a higher level.

It is this suggested intentional “conspiracy of silence” that Mr. Zachary Abuza refers to in the title of his new book, where he takes one step closer to answering the

questions posed above. By conducting research in the field and reading press reports, Mr. Abuza successfully manages to deliver a detailed account of the historical background, the secessionist insurgency from the 1970s to the 1990s, the outbreak of the conflict in 2004 including the Government’s efforts to quell the attacks. The author continues by explaining the growth of the insurgency, the dynamic of the violence and the tactics used. A detailed account is given of the organisations and groups behind the attacks, and the author also examines their possible internal connections as well as external connections with other actors and transnational terrorist groups.

Three key hypotheses are brought forward. Firstly, Abuza argues that the misplaced policies of the Thai Government of Thaksin Shinawatra made the problem worse, especially in light of the war on terror. Secondly, this domestically called conflict could be exacerbated if moderate Muslims are forced to flee and space becomes available for Salafis and Jihadists as well as other international groups such as Jemaah Islamiya. Thirdly, the conspiracy of silence indicates that groups are now more coordinated than before but also that they may not be interested in negotiating with the Thai Government, but rather to “provoke a heavy-handed government response” (p. 8) in order to be able to recruit more people and ultimately achieve their objectives.

The book provides the reader with a comprehensive but detailed overview of this conflict, which encourages further examination of other works on the subject. It will certainly be interesting to follow future conflict dynamics in the Southeast Asian region.

*Catrin Rosquist*

## The European Development Days

**The European Development Days is a showcase that, in a few days, presents the EU’s continuing and enduring commitment to development. The fourth edition of the European Development Days will be hosted in Stockholm, Sweden, on 22-24 October 2009.**

### 2009 Topics

- Democracy
- Adapting to climate change
- Promoting energy efficiency
- Global recession – no countries left behind

The European Development Days are a yearly event hosted jointly by the European Commission and the EU Presidency.

The European Development Days bring some 4,000 people and 1,500 organisations from the development community together on an equal footing. Delegates from 125 countries are represented, including heads of state and leading world figures, Nobel prize-winners among them.

The event aims to make development aid more effective, to build a global coalition against poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Through frank and sometimes controversial debates on pressing issues, such as governance, poverty and environmental sustainability, the European Development Days provide unprecedented opportunities for sharing ideas and launching innovative partnerships.

For further information about the conference, please see [www.eudevdays.eu](http://www.eudevdays.eu)

The fourth edition of European Development Days will take place in Hall A of the Stockholmsmässan.



## International Day of Peace

*Until the rainbow passes over the tears of the earth,  
let us gather all the energy to inspire festivals of joy and  
from here and now, from each of our hearts,  
let us declare Peace on Earth to the world.*



**2009 IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT YEAR** for Okinawan and Japanese history. It is 400 years since the Japanese Satsuma Clan invaded the Ryukyu Kingdom, which they eventually renamed Okinawa and incorporated into Japan. On April 1st, 1945 the US military landed on the main island of Okinawa to enter Japan at the final stages of World War II. The greatest casualty of this conflict were the citizens of Okinawa who were caught between the battling forces.

In spite of the tragic history of the beautiful island of Okinawa, its people have long been praying for world peace, aspiring to create harmony between humanity. We believe that the deep spirituality and great cordiality of Okinawan people that has been nurtured through the difficulties we have faced will serve the great purpose of creating world peace. With this belief, a Celebration Earth Festival is hosted from April 1, through to September 21st,

the International Day of Peace. Through this joyful series of events, we wish to gift the world a model of international peace and inner peace.

*From March Newsletter: New Culture of Peace Initiative*

In 1981 that the United Nations (UN) established The International Day of Peace to occur on the third Tuesday of September 1982, and in 2002, on the 20th anniversary, September 21 was established as the permanent date for the International Day of Peace.

Since its inception, Peace Day has marked personal and planetary progress toward peace. It has grown to include millions of people in all parts of the world, and each year events are organised to commemorate and celebrate this day. Events range in scale from private gatherings to public concerts and forums where hundreds of thousands of people participate.

## LPI PERIODICALS

**New Routes**, next issue of the quarterly journal will be out in March 2010.

**Horn of Africa Bulletin**, a monthly online newsletter covering the African countries of the Horn.

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