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Accord Spotlight
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Implementing peace accords sustainably:
alternative avenues to bypass blockages and mitigate resistance

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This builds on a body of work on implementation of peace agreements produced collectively by the Political Settlements Research Programme, which includes: Molloy and Paladini, 'More Inclusive Monitoring of Peace Agreement Implementation: Barometer Initiative in Colombia', in Carl (ed.), Navigating Inclusion in Peace Processes, PSRP/CR Accord Report (2019); Molloy, 'Assessing and Influencing Progress in Peace Processes', PSRP Report (2018); Bell and Molloy, 'How Peace Agreements Provide for Implementation', PSRP Report (2019); Bello-Schünemann, 'Sudan and South Sudan: Violence Trajectories after Peace Agreements', PSRP/ISS Report (2019); Bello-Schünemann and Moyer, 'Structural pressures and political instability Trajectories for sub-Saharan Africa', PSRP/ISS Report (2018); Schünemann and Lucey, 'Success and Failure of Political Settlements: Defining and Measuring Transformation', PSRP/ISS Report (2015).

Cover photo: People from the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia gather at a conference organised by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in April 2019 to discuss the Asmara peace deal and the ONLF's transition from an armed group to a political party. © Conciliation Resources

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Key findings and recommendations

Implementing peace accords is essential for sustaining peace and preventing recurrence of violence. But implementation often hits blockages and meets resistance, and is prone to delay, breakdown and collapse. Conciliation Resources as part of the Political Settlements Research Programme convened a series of online joint analysis workshops in 2020 in which practitioners, policymakers, donors, conflict parties, civil society and analysts collectively explored alternative avenues to navigate obstacles and maintain momentum in implementation, including case studies from Afghanistan, Colombia and Ethiopia. This *Accord Spotlight* presents some key reflections, findings and recommendations drawn from workshop discussions.

Findings
– blockages and resistance to implementation

Implementing short-term commitments in peace accords, to end armed conflict, is often at odds with implementing long-term commitments, to tranform its root cases. Implementation has proved much more effective in achieving short-term commitments, such as ceasefire, disarmament or establishing power-sharing, than long-term commitments, such as reconciliation, economic reform or addressing gender inequality. Inconsistencies between short- and long-term implementation undermine sustainability. For example, military power-sharing can help to end armed violence by engaging key armed groups in a joint military command structure, but it can also embed warlords in positions of authority or encourage groups outside of the process to use violence as a source of leverage.

Some of the most contentious wartime disputes are left to be resolved during implementation. Peace talks and agreements often use deliberately vague or ambiguous language ('constructive ambiguity') in order to sidestep or shelve disputes that are too difficult to resolve and that risk disrupting or collapsing the process, for example over the final status of a disputed territory. This can be an essential tactic for sustaining peace talks, but contentious disputes are then deferred to the implementation phase – along with the risk of process breakdown.

Conflict parties have primary responsibility for implementation but often cannot deliver key reforms needed for sustainable peace. Conflict party signatories of peace accords are often in transition during implementation and their internal structures can be unstable, experiencing dissent and splits, and changes in leadership. Conflict parties in peacetime often lack sufficient political *will* (internally, within the party), or cannot raise enough political *capital* (externally, beyond the party's support base) to take forward essential reforms. The central bargain of a peace accord, by which conflict parties trade violence in exchange for their own inclusion in mainstream politics, privileges the parties in implementation and can restrict opportunities for other groups to influence reform processes.

Key requirements for sustaining peace go beyond implementing a particular peace accord. Conflicts occur on multiple levels, from local to national and international, and involve different forms of violence, from armed violence to structural, gender and criminal violence. Peace accords negotiated between armed elites necessarily offer simplified or partial solutions and many requirements for sustainable peace fall outside of the formal implementation agenda. Implementation of a given peace accord often has to address legacies of previous agreements and implementation processes, which may have failed or been incomplete. Peace processes do not follow a straight line from talks through an accord into implementation, but move back and forwards across 'phases'.

Advancing gender inclusion in implementation faces multiple 'layers' of systemic resistance. Reform priorities for women or sexual and gender minorities[1] are often left off the implementation agenda altogether, or are weakened or abandoned as it moves forward, and implementation rates for gender commitments in peace accords are low.[2] Diversifying participation in implementation processes and mechanisms is important, but on its own cannot transform the patriarchal structures that predominate in the many political, military and religious institutions that are key to achieving reforms. Tokenistic gender participation can be counter-productive, reinforcing prejudices that women lack skills for leadership.

Recommendations
– alternative avenues for implementation, with practical examples from Afghanistan, Colombia and Ethiopia

Alternative avenues for implementation can help to bypass blockages, mitigate resistance and maintain momentum. Alternative avenues can include 'decentralising' implementation through regional and local processes, integrated combinations of top-down and bottom-up initiatives to implement gender commitments, and multiple monitoring mechanisms adapted to support implementation of short- and long-term objectives. Alternative avenues cannot 'fix' all implementation challenges, but can offer creative ways around obstacles, help keep the implementation process moving forward and open up different channels for representation and influence.

'Decentralised' implementation through local and regional initiatives can help bypass blockages in national processes. Conflict parties or other powerful actors can become resistant to implementation due to internal instability, deficits in political will or capital, or to avoid an undesirable outcome of a negotiation, consultation, or reform or accountability process. Legacies of negative past experiences of implementation such as unfulfilled commitments, or flawed or unfinished institutional reforms, can erode confidence in peace processes and fuel scepticism that they can deliver. Decentralised implementation can help to navigate obstructions, deliver quick dividends, build confidence and sustain momentum.

- *Decentralised implementation in Ethiopia – regional Joint Committee*: The 2018 peace accord between the Ethiopian Federal Government and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) left many key conflict issues unresolved, including the core challenge of self-determination for the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia (SRS, or 'Ogaden'). The Declaration established a Joint Committee between the conflict parties as a key implementation mechanism to take forward substantive political issues, and to act as a common platform to build confidence and consensus on transitional tasks and disputes.[3] The Joint Committee has got stuck and has not been able to make tangible progress at the *federal* level, however. Instead, the conflict parties have taken it forward at the *regional* level through a regional Joint Committee comprising the ONLF and the regional SRS government.

This too has faced challenges, but it has also been instrumental within the SRS in the demobilisation of ONLF fighters, facilitating the return of exiled ONLF leaders, providing essential medical and livelihood support for some victims, and launching a process for transitional justice and dealing with the past that has achieved important milestones including a draft law. *(See the SRS case study on p. 10)*

- *Decentralised implementation in Afghanistan – local peace initiatives*: Implementation of national peace accords in Afghanistan has had a difficult track record. For 20 years after the 2001 Bonn Accords, a violent Taliban insurgency expanded steadily, and post-Bonn state institutions were widely seen as partial, corrupt and ineffective, until they collapsed as the Taliban pushed into Kabul in August 2021. Popular hopes for a drop in violence following the 2020 Doha Accord between the US and the Taliban were not met. Efforts to reach a peace settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban prior to the scheduled US troop withdrawal failed. However, there are examples of effective local peace initiatives in several districts in northern and southern Afghanistan. Implementation of local accords in Afghanistan can generate 'quick return' peace dividends including fewer casualties, expanded opportunities for livelihoods and access to services. Quick returns provide an incentive to sustain the local initiatives and demonstrate their potential, and can help to broaden confidence in peace through Afghan conflict actors' and civil society's wider networks, even as national institutions collapse.[4] *(See the Afghanistan case study on p. 13)*

Integrated combinations of top-down and bottom-up initiatives can help mitigate systemic resistance to implementing gender commitments. Clear gender commitments in peace accords are important for implementation to establish targets and accountability, and to provide 'hooks' for advocacy. Implementation support structures and bodies can be mandated to promote gender and include diverse membership. But women and sexual and gender minorities face multiple forms of systemic exclusion that are hard to translate into negotiated provisions in a peace accord and that have proved resistant to conventional interventions. Combinations of top-down and bottom-up gender implementation strategies that engage elites and communities can help to 'level the gender playing field' and tackle complex gender inequalities from multiple directions.

- *Integrated gender implementation in Colombia – national commitments and rural conflict resolution*: The 2016 peace accord between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) includes 578 stipulations, 130 of which have specific obligations on gender.[5] Innovative implementation design in Colombia has included a High Level Commission on Gender mandated to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated in implementation, which for the first time makes different Colombian ministries collectively accountable for delivering on gender equality. But inclusive implementation has hit obstacles, in particular at local level, and in many regions women and ethnic leaders have been threatened and killed. The Ministry of Justice has been exploring alternative methods to resolve conflicts over local land rights using a gendered approach, including designing a gender-sensitive conflict resolution toolkit and building capacity of local organisations. *(See the Colombia case study on p. 17)*

- *Integrated gender implementation in Ethiopia – participation and partnership*: Gender-inclusive peace is challenging in the Somali Regional State (SRS) in Ethiopia, where society is largely patriarchal. Still, women's participation has been making progress in some transitional institutions in the SRS, for example in plans to have a minimum of two women in the prospective five-person Commission for Transitional Justice. But deeper change is needed to transform patriarchal institutions, for example relating to elders and religious leaders. Diverse groups of women need spaces where they can build political experience and confidence. Targeted training has been helping women gain essential skills, while women across different social and political groups have also been partnering to advocate around common challenges. Some diaspora women gained experience in politics and activism abroad, which they have brought back to the SRS since the peace accord was signed. *(See the SRS case study on p. 10)*

Multiple monitoring mechanisms can be adapted to support implementation of both short- and long-term objectives: Monitoring and verification mechanisms can encourage compliance in implementation and support sustainability. Short- and long-term monitoring present different challenges and need different approaches and methodologies. For example, short-term mechanisms such as to oversee ceasefires often need to prioritise 'ownership' by the conflict parties, to ensure the parties' accountability and help build confidence between them.[6] Long-term mechanisms such as to facilitate transitional justice or rural land reform may need more diverse participation involving local civil society, or organisations representing women, young people, ethnic or indigenous groups, or victims and survivors. International monitors can play important roles to mediate violations or apply political pressure on uncooperative groups.

- *Multiple monitoring mechanisms in Colombia – adapting inclusion*: The 2016 peace accord in Colombia agreed multiple mechanisms to oversee implementation. The primary national body is the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Peace Agreement, with participation of the government and the FARC. Within this, issue-specific bodies have been set up with different participation, such as Special High Level Body for Ethnic Peoples. A non-governmental monitoring body, the 'Barometer Initiative',[7] has further involved a team of local peacebuilders gathering data from a range of sources. UN missions have been deployed to help oversee the ceasefire, disarmament, reintegration of former FARC members, and security for former FARC members and local communities. The ongoing presence of a UN mission mandated by the Security Council has facilitated achievement of key priorities, including the ceasefire and disarmament of the FARC, and has further contributed to longer-term sustainability by providing important leverage to mitigate resistance to implementation that emerged with the change of government in Colombia in 2018. *(See the Colombia case study on p. 17)*

Introduction

Implementing peace accords is essential for sustaining peace and preventing recurrence of violence. The sustainability of any peace process depends on how effectively an accord is implemented. But implementation is difficult. Many peace agreements get stuck, meet strong resistance or are only partially implemented, and implementation is prone to delay, breakdown and collapse.

Effective implementation of peace accords faces many blockages and points of resistance. Implementation has in practice been much more successful in ending armed conflict in the short term, such as achieving a ceasefire or disarmament, or establishing power-sharing, than transforming its root causes in the long term, such as advancing truth and reconciliation, expanding political participation, or addressing gender inequality. Some of the most contentious wartime disputes are left to be resolved during implementation. Peace processes do not follow a straight line from talks through an accord to implementation, but move back and forwards across different 'phases', and implementation of a given peace accord often has to address legacies of previous agreements and implementation processes, positive and negative.

Signatories of peace accords have primary responsibility for implementation. But they cannot deliver on important commitments for transformative change, as they are prone to splits or changes in leadership during implementation, and may lack sufficient political capital to take forward essential reforms such as relating to reconciliation, political decentralisation or constitutional changes. Sustaining peace goes beyond implementing a particular peace accord, and many requirements for transforming conflict fall outside of the formal implementation agenda.

To explore in more depth how peace implementation can work around blockages, mitigate resistance and maintain momentum, Conciliation Resources as part of the Political Settlements Research Programme organised a series of five online joint analysis workshops in 2020, which explored key implementation themes, as well as case studies of implementation in Afghanistan, Colombia and Ethiopia. The workshops were attended by more than 200 selected participants with experience of peace implementation, including practitioners, policymakers, donors, state and non-state conflict parties, civil society and analysts.

This *Accord Spotlight* summarises the main workshop themes and points of discussion. It first reviews some fundamental concepts and practicalities of implementation, and then analyses implementation challenges and responses to these in relation to the three case studies.

Implementing peace accords

The signing of a peace agreement marks the end of one process but also the beginning of another. Peace accords can include provisions on the creation of institutional mechanisms to allow access to state power and economic resources, empower minority or identity groups, compensate victims, or demobilise combatants and integrate them back into society. Short-term implementation commitments can include steps to end direct hostilities, build confidence, create verification and dispute resolution mechanisms, and establish the institutional and legal prerequisites for implementation. Mid- and longer-term commitments can include 'primary' electoral reforms, which need to be implemented ahead of the first post-agreement election, truth and reconciliation, and addressing structural drivers of conflict.[8]

Short- and longer-term commitments require different implementation strategies and support. Short-term commitments to end armed conflict are often comparatively *clear, finite* and *exclusive*. They are formulated using unambiguous language, and are achievable in implementation through involvement of primarily the conflict parties within a set timeframe. They tend to require mainly *technical* support, such as third-party mechanisms to oversee the demobilisation of armed forces or compliance with a ceasefire. Longer-term commitments to transform root causes are more likely to be *ambiguous, open-ended* and *inclusive*, requiring ongoing negotiation between the conflict parties or wider societal engagement. They tend to require more *political* support, such as to facilitate dialogue for inclusive constitutional reform, or to enhance women's political, social and economic conditions.

Implementation support mechanisms

Workshop discussions reviewed an array of implementation mechanisms that exist to support achievement of different commitments in peace accords, such as relating to ceasefires, decommissioning of weapons, demobilisation of armed forces, elections, land reform, power-sharing, reform of the security sector and promoting gender equality.

Implementation often uses safeguards to mitigate against challenges. These can offer institutional support for addressing short-term obstacles, as well as helping to develop more effective relationships among different groups to facilitate implementation over the longer term. Examples of safeguards include transitional power-sharing arrangements, dispute resolution mechanisms and verification mechanisms. Safeguards can look to counter commitment or implementation challenges such as relating to mutual mistrust. Transitional power-sharing arrangements give parties to the agreement a stake in the implementation process by enabling them to participate in governance. Parties can use dispute resolution mechanisms to clarify disagreements over the meaning, intent or application of provisions in peace accords without disrupting the entire agreement.[9]

Monitoring and verification mechanisms can encourage compliance in implementation and support sustainability. Monitoring involves collecting data on implementation. It may be conducted remotely or locally, gathering information through sources such as the parties to an agreement, a specialist observer team, citizen reporting or technological surveillance. Verification uses monitoring data to assess parties' adherence to an agreement, confirm compliance, or deter violations through threat of exposure and possible sanction. Monitoring mechanisms can include international, regional, sub-regional or national actors, civil society groups, community and religious organisations, media or research institutions, or combinations of these. Peace agreements can establish bodies to oversee the implementation of an entire accord, or of specific areas of implementation such as relating to refugees or gender. Civil society actors and others often engage in informal monitoring.[10]

Dispute resolution mechanisms fall into two basic categories – adjudicative mechanisms, which provide a third-party ruling and a proscribed or enforced remedy, with little space for renegotiation; and flexible dispute resolution mechanisms, which provide space for ongoing mediation. Adjudicative mechanisms offer rulings in different ways, including through enforcement by a peacekeeping force, binding arbitration mechanisms, or predetermined sanctions for non-compliance. Flexible dispute resolution mechanisms can refer conflict parties to a third party for mediation. They can include non-binding forms of conflict-party dispute resolution, such as provided through committees established by the parties and which often involve third parties, through mechanisms for processes of political review, or through ongoing consultation. Flexible dispute resolution mechanisms can provide a space for ongoing negotiation for changing circumstances and contexts, or where provisions are deliberately ambiguous or have been omitted.[11]

Implementation and inclusion

Participants at the workshop discussed the increasing emphasis placed on promoting inclusion in the implementation of peace accords. Inclusion provisions in peace accords are often seen as helping to validate advocacy for inclusion during peace implementation, or to facilitate inclusive legislation. Quotas, selection procedures and criteria can promote more inclusive representation in implementation mechanisms, transitional administrative bodies, and constitutional and legislative assemblies. Selection criteria can be predefined in peace accords. A range of less formal social and political dynamics also affect how inclusion evolves in peace implementation in practice – from ethnicity, to gender, age, status, political orientation and patronage networks.[12]

Strong and inclusive monitoring and oversight mechanisms can assess the progress of implementation and help encourage compliance. As explored in more detail in the Colombia case study below, monitoring mechanisms themselves can be more or less inclusive, comprising different configurations of national or international membership across multiple levels – provincial, state, regional or international; and civil society, community and religious bodies, media or research institutions.

The prevailing model in peace processes is to expand inclusion 'outwards' from the main conflict parties as the process progresses. The implementation phase in particular is seen as a key opportunity to open up the process to broader interests, beyond those of the negotiating parties. Groups that had been excluded from peace talks often press for greater representation during implementation, challenging a perceived 'legitimacy gap' carried over from a peace accord and looking to implementation as their opening to influence change.[13]

Inconsistencies in implementation

There are many inconsistencies in implementing peace accords that can undermine effectiveness. Unrealistic timeframes can build unhelpful pressure and exacerbate perceptions of failure when they are missed, and international support for implementation tends to decline over time. Parties' adherence to fulfilling their commitments can be compromised by low levels of confidence. Legacies of war – war economies, mistrust and polarisation – can create adverse conditions for implementation.[14] Some provisions of peace accords are especially resistant to implementation. Commitments on transitional justice are often opposed fiercely by negotiating parties, as those responsible for implementing them are also most liable. Economic reforms and ethnic, gender and environmental commitments have lower implementation rates than provisions relating to disarmament, power-sharing or political participation.[15]

Short- and long-term implementation goals to end armed conflict and transform its root causes can in practice often be out of sync or at odds, and work against each other. For example, military power-sharing can help to end armed violence by engaging key armed groups in a joint military command structure. But it can also embed warlords in positions of authority or encourage groups outside of the implementation process to use violence as a source of leverage.

Many of the most controversial conflict challenges are carried over into implementation. Peace talks and agreements often resort to 'constructive ambiguity', in which deliberately ambiguous language is used to sidestep or 'shelve' disputes that are too difficult for the conflict parties to resolve and that risk collapsing the process, for example determining the final status of a disputed territory. As a result, however, the disputes are postponed until the implementation phase, along with the risk of process collapse. Peace processes do not follow a straight line from talks through an accord to implementation. Rather they are 'messy' and go back and forwards across different 'phases'.

Conflict party signatories of peace accords have primary responsibility for implementing them. However, they cannot follow through on many important commitments for transformative change. During implementation conflict parties are themselves in transition and their internal structures and leaderships are likely to be in flux and unstable, with splits or changes in leadership. Conflict parties carry on many wartime disputes into implementation. Their social and political networks are often limited or divided. This restricts their capacity to deliver key reforms such as relating to transitional justice or reconciliation, or to political decentralisation or electoral reform. Signatories of a peace accord can become resistant to implementation following a change of leadership, due to internal dissent or splits, to avoid an undesirable outcome of a negotiation or consultation, or if they cannot raise enough political capital in peacetime to carry through promised reforms.

Important priorities for sustainable peace are often not part of the official implementation agenda. Conflicts work on multiple levels and involve different forms of violence – from armed violence, to structural and gendered violence – and peace accords and processes necessarily offer simplified or incomplete solutions. The implementation of a given peace accord often builds on previous agreements and processes. Legacies of negative past experiences of implementation, such as unfulfilled commitments, or defective or unfinished institutional reforms, can leave behind 'residual resistance' to new peace efforts and scepticism that these can deliver.

Implementation in practice in Afghanistan, Colombia and Ethiopia

Three case studies of implementing peace accords in practice were explored in some detail in dedicated workshop sessions looking at Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Colombia. Synopses of the discussions presented below examine how alternative implementation avenues have helped to sidestep blockages, mitigate resistance and maintain momentum. Alternative avenues can include initiatives to 'decentralise' implementation, to 'level the gender playing field', and to deploy multiple monitoring mechanisms adapted to oversee different implementation objectives.

CASE STUDY 1

Implementing peace in the Somali Regional State, Ethiopia[16]

The 2018 Asmara Declaration ended nearly two decades of fighting between the Ogaden National Liberation Front and the Ethiopian Federal Government. An opportunity for peace had opened unexpectedly earlier in the year after a sudden change of leadership in Ethiopia. The ONLF declared a unilateral ceasefire in July 2018 and agreed with the Ethiopian government to open peace dialogue, resulting in the Declaration. This followed several rounds of discussions in Dubai, Ethiopia and Eritrea, which themselves followed many years of intermittent peace talks since 2012.

Asmara Declaration and conditions for implementation

Negotiations for the Asmara Declaration almost unravelled at the eleventh hour over whether or not to include reference to self-determination for the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia (SRS – also known as the Ogaden region). This was the central dispute in the conflict, and for the ONLF it was essential that the accord at least alluded to self-determination, which lay at the heart of their movement. But the issue was hypersensitive for the Ethiopian federal government, which also faced unrest in other federal states. The parties agreed to mutually acceptable language in the Declaration that committed them to tackle the 'root causes' of the conflict, and to set up a Joint Committee to address outstanding political issues. The Asmara Declaration further includes three key provisions: to end hostilities; that the Government of Ethiopia should respect and abide by its constitution; and that the ONLF should conduct its political activities peacefully.

The Declaration is very short – fitting easily onto a single page. This leaves many substantive issues to be resolved subsequently during the implementation phase. Workshop participants discussed how such lack of detail is in line with other peace accords signed by the Ethiopian government. It also reflects a desire to conclude the Declaration quickly during the final talks, after many years of previous negotiations. At the time of the Declaration, Ethiopian politics was opening up very fast. Exiled mid-level ONLF leaders and supporters were already returning to the SRS region, and the ONLF senior leadership was keen to maintain momentum in the negotiations. Radical reforms were being introduced by the new Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, which brought further momentum to the talks and helped to build trust between the conflict parties. This contributed to persuading the ONLF to defer dialogue on key substantive issues to the implementation phase of the process.

The Eritrean government supplied good offices for the talks and was represented at them. But the 2018 agreement does not provide for a third-party monitoring mechanism, which is not something that normally occurs in peace processes in Ethiopia. In December 2018, the ONLF leadership and fighters returned to the region, gathering in five demobilisation centres.
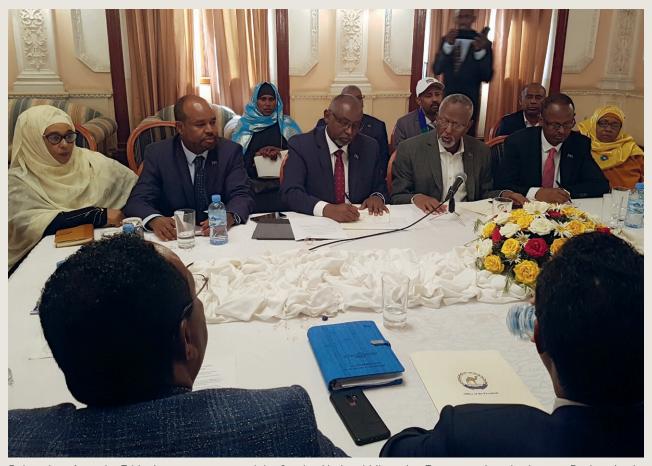
There has been criticism of the terms of the Declaration. This includes that the Ethiopian government conceded to ending the war with the ONLF without compromising or resolving key political problems that have plagued both the SRS region and previous negotiations between the two parties for many years; and that the ONLF leadership accepted the Declaration because they were left with few alternatives, having been weakened militarily and politically, and because it offered them the chance of achieving political relevance inside Ethiopia.[17]

Workshop participants discussed how there have been multiple transitions happening simultaneously in the SRS since the signing of the Declaration, which interact with its implementation in different ways. These include Ethiopia's political transition since Abiy's accession to power in 2018; the transition of the ONLF into a political party, and from a diaspora-based into a domestic organisation; the reconfiguration of the regional government in the SRS; and the evolution of civil society in the region. The ONLF post-conflict transition has included internal dissent and splits, and new forms of political engagement with constituencies based in the SRS following the return of the ONLF leadership to the SRS after 20 years of exile. The ONLF has gone through irreversible transition since the Declaration – symbolised in their change of insignia from a pen and gun to a pen and an eagle.

Alternative implementation avenues

Regional Joint Committee

Significant weight has been placed on the Joint Committee to address outstanding challenges that were not dealt with in the Asmara Declaration. The Committee is mandated to 'discuss substantive issues pertaining to the root causes of the conflict in the region', and is further intended to act as a common platform for the parties to build confidence and consensus on transitional tasks and disputes.[18] The ONLF hoped that the Asmara Declaration represented the first step in a longer political dialogue with Addis Ababa, which would enable the group to make political headway in tackling outstanding grievances, and they looked to the Joint Committee as a key institution in which to further their political aspirations.

Delegations from the Ethiopian government and the Ogaden National Liberation Front negotiate the Asmara Declaration in Asmara, Eritrea, October 2018 © Conciliation Resources

However, the Joint Committee between the Federal Ethiopian Government and the ONLF has not yet been established. Workshop discussions described how the ONLF's negotiation team have complained that since the signing of the agreement, the Federal Government has not engaged significantly with the implementation process, pointing to the failure to establish the Joint Committee as evidence of this. The lack of a third-party monitoring mechanism has meant that there is no obvious formal vehicle through which to put pressure on Addis Ababa to engage with the Joint Committee.

In the absence of meaningful dialogue at the federal level, a regional level Joint Committee was established in 2019 involving representatives of the ONLF and the SRS regional government. The establishment of this regional Committee has had its own successes and problems. The regional Joint Committee was instrumental in the demobilisation of the ONLF fighters, ensuring lines of communication between the government and the ONLF on administrative and logistical support for returning leaders, and providing immediate medical and livelihood support for some victims. It also tasked the Regional President's legal adviser with working on a strategy and a law on transitional justice and dealing with the past. The latter process has achieved important milestones including a draft law – even when the rest of the Joint Committee's work and meetings were stalled.

Workshop discussions explored how the first few meetings of the regional Committee were opened by SRS President Mustafa Mohammed Omar. But things have since slowed, held up by intensification of political competition ahead of forthcoming elections. There have also been some confrontations between ONLF supporters and regional forces. The regional Committee is a highly political body that works when the two sides are in accord on particular issues. Conciliation Resources has provided technical and logistical support for the Committee, for example by shuttling between the two sides to help iron out differences. Despite difficulties and delays, the existence of the regional Joint Committee provides a platform to launch the reconciliation process in the SRS.

Gender

Advancing gender inclusion is difficult in the SRS's patriarchal society. There is no legal framework for increasing women's political participation in Ethiopia as the constitution does not provide for quotas. Still, women's participation has been making progress in some transitional institutions in the SRS, for example in plans to have a minimum of two women and two men in the prospective five-person Commission for Transitional Justice. But participation does not automatically break down patriarchal structures, such as among elders, religious leaders and intellectuals. Diverse groups of women need spaces where they can build political experience. Targeted training has been helping women learn essential skills, while women across different social groups have also been joining together around common challenges. Some diaspora women gained experience in politics and activism abroad, which they have brought back to the SRS. Tokenistic involvement of women can be counter-productive, reinforcing prejudices that women lack the right skills for leadership.

Civil society

Civil society has seen remarkable growth in the SRS since the Amhara Declaration. Prior to this, much of organised civil society was diaspora-based, and space for civil society in the SRS itself was limited. Since 2018 new groups have emerged representing victims and survivors, 'intellectuals' (eminent professionals) and female former combatants, among others. Structured civil society remains nascent and needs support, which is a challenge as different groups have very different levels of organisation. Civil society mobilisation has made a major contribution to progressing issues like transitional justice and engagement in democratic politics.

Trust in political elites and institutions is low in the SRS and organising elections that are free and fair and that can sustain popular confidence requires investment in public information and education. Civil society has an important role to play in this. Some civil society initiatives have benefitted from media coverage. For example, victims' and survivors' narratives and stories were broadcast on local media in the SRS, which prompted SRS political parties and the conflict parties to issue apologies and affirm recognition of victims' issues, contributing to a growing acknowledgement that victims need reparation and justice.

CASE STUDY 2
Implementing peace in Afghanistan[19]

The International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn, Germany, on 5 December 2011, 10 years on from the 2001 Bonn Accords. Photo: Canada in Afghanistan CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Afghanistan has seen multiple efforts to implement peace accords over recent decades – from the Peshawar Accord in 1992, to the Geneva Accords in 1988, the Bonn Accords in 2001, and the Doha Accord in 2020. By capturing the capital in August 2021, the Taliban movement closed down the pursuit of a political settlement. They succeeded in collapsing both the national security forces against whom they had fought and the state which they had been supposed to negotiate with. However, the successful Taliban power grab left unresolved all the fundamental questions about the character of the state. These questions may well necessitate an eventual return to the negotiation table. There will be plenty of lessons for the architects of the next iteration of the Afghan peace process to draw on.

An overarching challenge for peace implementation in Afghanistan is to restore public trust that commitments in agreements will be fulfilled, as successive peace and power-sharing agreements are seen by many to have been 'honoured in the breach'.

National institutions established in response to peace accords have been routinely criticised as partial, corrupt or ineffective. Proposals to establish new institutions as part of a future peace settlement risk lacking credibility, not least as the Republic's state institutions were under 'permanent reform' for twenty years from the Bonn Accords to the time of the collapse.[20] Popular hopes that the Doha agreement would reduce levels of violence and open the way for intra-Afghan agreement were dashed.

A view expressed by a young Afghan woman participant at the workshop feared that a future bargain between the current Afghan state and the Taliban movement would involve concessions to the Taliban in relation to restrictions on women's role in politics, the workplace and society at large, plus limitations imposed on freedom of speech and religious belief. This illustrated the tension, in pursuit of a settlement, between the objective of stopping the war between the Taliban and non-Taliban forces and the objective of protecting and advancing human rights and other reforms.

Bonn Accords (2001)

Following 9/11, a US-led international military coalition fought with the Afghan Northern Alliance to oust the Taliban from power. Negotiations in Bonn among Afghan opposition parties reached agreement in December 2001 on an interim governing structure, pending the establishment of a democratically elected government. The Bonn Accords set up a process for drafting a new constitution and holding presidential and parliamentary elections. The Taliban were not included in the Bonn talks, which set the scene for a 20 years post-Bonn Taliban insurgency.

Democratic institutions and state legitimacy

Workshop discussions suggested that a key element of the constitutional settlement which emerged from the Bonn Accords was the provision for multiple layers of elected, representative government – municipalities, the district and provincial councils, the national parliament and the presidency. An Independent Election Commission was created after Bonn to administer the frequent rounds of voting needed to establish the new democratic system. The proliferation of elections in the settlement was driven in part by popular democratic impulse within Afghanistan, and in part by the rationale that the political system required legitimacy to achieve stability.

On the level of national government, the Bonn settlement provided the basis of two decades of unprecedented political stability. The lively popular demand for political participation and democracy characterised the whole of the republican period. However, the deeply flawed electoral process failed to deliver either legitimacy or stability. This was ultimately evidenced by the protracted dispute over the 2019 presidential election. In spite of sustained national and international investment, large-scale fraud became a characteristic of Afghan elections. A suggestion at the workshop was that a design fault that aggravated this problem was the high degree of centralisation of power provided for in the constitution, and the consequently limited popular accountability of the president and senior officials once they claimed electoral success.

The experience of the Bonn constitutional settlement has multiple implications for prospects of any further attempts to achieve a peace settlement. One perspective discussed at the workshop is that the intra-Afghan talks that began between the Taliban and the Afghan government in 2020 could have provided an opportunity to mandate far-reaching reforms and provide for well-conducted national elections as part of a settlement reached between them. However, Taliban representatives routinely seized upon the low turn-out and disputes in the Republic's elections to strengthen their case for abandoning electoral democracy altogether. Meanwhile, until the collapse, political party activists within the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan continued to push for rewriting of the electoral laws and implementation of reforms independently of peace negotiations as part of their efforts to strengthen the position of the 'Islamic Republic' in the face of the challenge from the Taliban's 'Islamic Emirate'.

Justice and impunity

The Bonn Accords were signed after 23 years of war. The new government and judicial institutions established after Bonn inherited a legacy of war crimes and abuses perpetrated by the overthrown Taliban, but also by the Afghan communists, Soviet invaders and some of the *mujahideen* who returned to the forefront of national affairs after 2002. There was some attempt to address justice issues at the time of the Bonn settlement, with the establishment of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the launch of a transitional justice initiative, including a 'Mapping' exercise to document all major war crimes. But it became increasingly clear that Bonn had delivered 'victors' justice', and there was no serious attempt at pursuing even major perpetrators in the courts.

In fact, the Afghan parliament passed what became known as the 'Amnesty Law', which proclaimed amnesty for war crimes committed before 2002 while the Mapping report was suppressed, and eventually the International Criminal Court tried to initiate proceedings against a number of alleged war criminals. The lesson from Bonn was that the Afghan government preferred to defer accountability and justice for victims of war crimes, to avoid jeopardising the peace settlement. Accommodation of potential violent spoilers remained the preferred approach to dealing with regional strongmen and other powerful figures.[21] Despite the many years and funds that donors spent engaged in Afghanistan, a successful Afghan peace process going forward will likely require a return to the issue of how to assure meaningful accountability of Afghan institutions.

Doha Accord (2020)

After many years of refusing to negotiate directly with the Taliban, the US government under the Trump Administration entered into talks with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, in 2018. An agreement was reached between the Taliban and the US on 29 February 2020 (the Doha Accord), which purported to lay the foundations for reducing violence and beginning substantive peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government – referred to as 'intra-Afghan' talks. However, after the accord the violence increased and peace talks stalled.

Reduction of violence

Immediately after the Doha Agreement, reducing violence became a key focus of peace dialogue in Afghanistan. The Taliban observed military restraint for a week before the signing of the Doha Accord. This reduction of violence responded to a demand by the US for an 80 per cent cut in Taliban attacks compared to the preceding week as a condition for the agreement. Reducing violence was not formally a part of the written US-Taliban agreement. However, workshop discussion explored how it remained part of the rhetoric accompanying the peace process, and US political figures publicly stated that they expected the Taliban to undertake 'meaningful and sustained' reduction of violence once the US-Taliban agreement was signed and as the parties prepared to move to negotiations.[22]

Within a day of the signing of the agreement, however, the Taliban military resumed attacks. They rationalised this position by arguing that they had an agreement with the US which amounted to a ceasefire with international forces. But they claimed that none of the obligations in the agreement prohibited them from attacking Afghan forces. Participants in the workshop discussed how, in the months immediately after the US-Taliban accord, those attempting to defend the agreement to the Afghan government or for an international audience claimed that the Taliban were still prepared to reduce violence more broadly. But Taliban leaders defending the agreement to their own military reassured them that no restrictions had been placed on their ability to conduct operations against the Afghan forces.

Prisoner releases and sequencing

The Doha Accord also provided for the US to secure the release of up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners being held by the Afghan government before the Taliban would join intra-Afghan talks with the Kabul authorities. The numbers involved made this a substantive concession by the US, rather than a more cosmetic concession to serve primarily as a confidence-building measure, as is normally the case with prisoner exchange. The Taliban consistently asserted that they had dealt with the US rather than with Kabul on the issue of prisoners, even though prisoners were held by the Afghan government, as a way to legitimise themselves as a quasi-state actor. Taliban insistence that they nominate prisoners to be released, and that all 5,000 be released before intra-Afghan negotiations began, introduced 'hard conditionality' into the process. In fact, many released prisoners rapidly returned to the battlefield, which undermined confidence in the peace process within the Afghan security forces.[23]

Intra-Afghan talks

US-Taliban negotiations after 2018 hinged on a conditional US military withdrawal in return for the Taliban agreeing to proceed to peace talks with the Afghan Government towards reaching a peace settlement, with a ceasefire high on the agenda. The logic behind this approach assumed the Taliban being ready to embrace a peace settlement with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. However, the February 2020 Doha Accord actually reduced the commitment to achieving a peace settlement, instead requiring the Taliban and the Kabul authorities to discuss the shape of a future Afghan Islamic government. The Doha Accord anticipated that intra-Afghan talks would be convened ten days after it was signed on 29 February 2020, but in fact these talks experienced repeated delays through the spring and summer of 2020, as the Taliban hardened their conditions over prisoner releases. Following the transition from the Trump to the Biden Administration in the US in January 2021, renewed talks in Doha failed to make substantive progress. Then, in April 2021, the Biden Administration confirmed the US would withdraw troops from Afghanistan in September 2021.

Taliban negotiators were throughout careful to reaffirm their willingness to discuss a ceasefire, but avoided giving any more definite commitment. Meanwhile, the Taliban military sustained its operations, escalating the level of violence rather than reducing it. A discussion in the workshop suggested that the Taliban leadership feared that any sustained ceasefire could lead to their volunteer military dispersing, undermining the military leverage which they credit with having helped them achieve concessions. On the other hand, Afghan government, political and civil society figures all called for an early ceasefire and pointed to the Taliban's procrastination as evidence of the movement's commitment to a military solution.[24]

An analysis of the Taliban leadership position expressed at the workshop was that they had not, in fact, been committed to pursuing a peace settlement with the Afghan government, but rather signed the Doha Accord as a way of securing US commitment to military withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Taliban's subsequent involvement in intra-Afghan peace talks was merely calibrated to avoid collapsing the overall process, which would have jeopardised the US withdrawal.

Alternative implementation avenues

Building on a long history of local peacemaking, contemporary examples of local peace initiatives were documented in districts in northern and southern Afghanistan, in which local authorities and civil society engaged with combatants to agree and implement local peace accords.[25] Whereas the national level peace negotiations became obsolete as the Taliban took over Kabul, local civil society retained some capacity to organise and advocate for communities, holding out the hope for at least some continuity in peace efforts.

For example, in May 2020 in Bala Morghab in Badghis Province a caucus of peace activists in consultation with a senior Taliban official organised the district *ulema* to petition the Taliban district authorities. They reached an agreement to restrict activities of armed Taliban in selected areas, implementation of which allowed displaced civilians to return to the area and some businesses to reopen. The Bala Morghab initiative had limited objectives to de-escalate armed violence, while explicitly refraining from challenging the Taliban leadership which might have risked a violent backlash.

There are also examples of more 'transformational' approaches to local peacemaking, in which local peace actors actively challenge the authority of the Taliban central leadership and seek to tackle structural as well as armed violence. During 2020, Taliban involved in local peacemaking in northern Afghanistan described themselves as a broader 'movement' that aimed to organise across multiple provinces in support of a vision of sustainable peace with social justice. This involved ambitions for a general ceasefire, confidence-building measures and a move to political dialogue. It went beyond any authority delegated to local officials by the Taliban central leadership, although local Taliban were careful to avoid attributable public criticism of the leadership. Implementation of local agreements in the north included withholding fighters from the armed conflict in order to de-escalate violence.[26] Many of the issues, under the broad heading of social justice, which were addressed by the nascent movement in northern Afghanistan during the insurgency, became even more salient after the Taliban takeover.

This 'decentralisation' of peacemaking helped to insulate local action from the failures to implement the Doha Accord's provisions regarding progress towards a ceasefire and negotiations for the national peace settlement. Workshop participants discussed how successful implementation of local peace accords can generate 'rapid return' peace dividends, with benefits for both civilians and combatants alike, including reduced casualties, expanded opportunities for livelihoods and access to services or patronage. These rapid returns provide incentives to sustain the initiatives and demonstrate their potential. The main hope for a bottom-up effect was that successful local initiatives would build confidence, develop broader network linkages among conflict actors and civil society, so that national level figures, including peace negotiators, could be inspired by local experience to raise their ambition in negotiations. The Taliban military move into Kabul and collapse of negotiations foreclosed this. However, the transition to a phase of the Afghan conflict without an active, formal, peace process, raises a new set of questions over the potential for surviving local peace initiatives to help maintain or open up the space for an eventual revival of national-level efforts to achieve a settlement.[27]

CASE STUDY 3

Implementing peace in Colombia[28]

Crowds celebrate the signing of a historic ceasefire agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC on 23 June 2016 in Havana, Cuba. Photo: Agencia Prensa Rural CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The designers of the Colombian process placed major emphasis on inclusion and gender, in the text of the agreement and also in implementation. Discussions at the workshop explored how inclusion was seen as key to sustainability and non-recurrence of violence, and as the 'glue' that could connect short- and long-term implementation strategies to end armed violence and to tackle its root causes.

Inclusion and gender were central to the 2016 peace accord between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Colombian peace accord and process are widely looked to internationally as a model for gender-sensitivity and the inclusion of women's rights.[29] More than half of all 578 stipulations in the agreement relate to inclusion and local peacebuilding, including an ethnic 'chapter' that the parties negotiated with indigenous and afro-Colombian leaders. Some 130 stipulations have specific obligations relating to women and sexual and gender minorities, and gender equality and ethnic sensitivity are stated principles for implementation.[30]

Implementation of the 2016 Colombian peace accord has achieved remarkable progress in view of the decades of often very violent conflict in the country. But it has also experienced major blockages and setbacks. Good progress has been made achieving short-term priorities, such as ceasefire, disarmament, and the establishment of implementation support mechanisms. The focus of implementation has since moved on to transforming longer-term root causes, where progress has in places been much slower, for example in relation to rural reform, tackling illicit drugs and reintegrating ex-combatants.[31]

The peace process has focused on a number of key issues as part of an integrated and inclusive approach:

• Rural development: regarding access to land, substitution of coca crops, victims' reparation, investing in public goods and services, and local community participation in the peacebuilding process.

- Transitional justice: institutional architecture responding to victims' rights – justice, truth and reparation mechanisms, which aspire to be complementary and to synchronise with the implementation of the rest of the agreement.

- Power-sharing: political reforms intended to enhance participation and representation in public affairs, and to facilitate the FARC's transition into a democratic political party and representation in public institutions such as the National Congress.

- Security: more than 20 institutional and normative mechanisms provide for security of former combatants, local communities and social leaders, including a National Commission for Security and Protection, several protection committees, an early alert and reaction system, and two elite corps within the police and the attorney general's office – as well as a strategy to tackle criminality and corruption.

Implementation monitoring and support mechanisms

The 2016 Colombian peace accord set up a complex set of mechanisms to monitor and follow-up on implementation. An overarching structure was the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Peace Agreement (CSIVI), comprising representation from the government and the FARC. It is mandated to help resolve differences between the parties in interpreting the accord, to monitor and verify their compliance, to support legal aspects of implementation, and report periodically on the implementation process. The 2016 accord provided for two UN missions to support implementation – to monitor the ceasefire and FARC disarmament; and then to monitor implementation of provisions on the reintegration of former combatants, their security and the security of conflict-affected communities.

The 2016 peace accord gave the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute primary responsibility for technical verification and monitoring of implementation through its Peace Accords Matrix (PAM) 'Barometer Initiative' – the first time a university-based research centre has played such a direct role in supporting the implementation of a peace agreement.[32] The Barometer has been assessing the degree of implementation of actionable commitments in the accord, and also of cross-cutting priorities relating to gender, ethnicity and territorial peace and human rights. The Barometer has tried to open up the implementation process to be more inclusive. A team of local peacebuilders gathers data from multiple sources, including government officials, FARC advisers, the international community, NGOs, think tanks and universities, and women's and ethnic organisations.

The Barometer publishes analyses of implementation progress and challenges, making these available publicly and sharing them with multiple organisations. Barometer data has been used to identify lags in implementation on issues such as land reform and social justice to support advocacy efforts. Data from the Barometer has celebrated implementation successes as well as highlighting failures, for example in relation to progress on disarmament.[33]

Discussions at the workshop explored how the high proportion of provisions in the 2016 accord relating to inclusion and gender has translated into mechanisms to support inclusive and gender-sensitive implementation. Gender equality is incorporated as a 'principle of implementation' in the 2016 agreement, to ensure that all mandated monitoring and verification bodies have a strong gender equality perspective. Issue-specific monitoring mechanisms include a High Level Advisory Body for the Implementation of the Gender Based Approach in the Final Peace Accord. The Colombian government, additionally, created its own High Level Government Commission to coordinate and promote the implementation of the gender dimensions of the peace agreement. Both were established in 2018 and are mandated to ensure gender and women's perspectives in the implementation process. Implementation of the 2016 peace accord is guided by the Framework Plan for Implementation (PMI). This is a national policy that specifies different agencies responsible for implementing provisions of the accord, indicators to measure progress, and timelines for advances over 15 years. The PMI includes a chapter on gender with 51 indicators, progress on which has been monitored by the two High Level Bodies on gender.[34]

A tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) that was established to oversee the ceasefire in Colombia comprised representation from the conflict parties as well as an international component of unarmed international observers from the first UN deployment, the UN Mission in Colombia. It was tacitly agreed that each component of the MVM should include 20 per cent women, although achieving this target proved difficult in practice. The second UN deployment, the UN Verification in Colombia that took over in September 2017, was mandated to oversee reintegration and security guarantees. It has had a much larger civilian component and has been able to achieve much enhanced gender parity.[35]

FARC transition

A key aspect of the implementation process has been the transition of the FARC into a non-violent political party and movement. Significant successes include achievement of the bilateral ceasefire between the FARC and the government, and the complete disarmament of the FARC and its transformation into a democratic political party that can participate actively and peacefully in Colombia's political and electoral processes. Participants at the workshop discussed how the designers of the peace process in Colombia put in place 'fast-track' legislative mechanisms ahead of the signing of the peace accord. These learned from the US model of free trade agreements, and enabled complex legislation to be passed very quickly during implementation in order to facilitate the FARC's transition.

The 2016 peace accord provides for a National Reincorporation Council (CNR), comprising two members each from the FARC and the government, to assist with reincorporating former FARC fighters back into society. A gender working group was subsequently established within CNR to focus specifically on the reincorporation of female ex-combatants. Participants at the workshop discussed how this working group was not anticipated in the 2016 accord but grew 'organically' during implementation in response to increasing recognition for greater focus on the needs of female FARC fighters. However, there has been disagreement whether reintegration should be pursued on a collective basis, based on communal rural development initiatives and land allocation, or an individual basis. A hybrid arrangement has been agreed, although reintegration continues to face significant challenges in practice.

Workshop participants discussed how insecurity and the targeted killing of FARC members since the peace agreement has been a major challenge, which has severely restricted the movement's capacity to reform and challenged its adherence to the peace process. The FARC has experienced internal tensions, in particular between political elites and former base combatants, as well as factional splits including by Ivan Marquez – one of the FARC negotiators of the 2016 peace agreement who has since announced renewed armed conflict with the government. A participant at the workshop described how the FARC's broader transition has further been hampered by continuing counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency propaganda, stigmatisation and dehumanisation, which have intensified perceptions among many sectors of Colombian society that the FARC is the primary cause of Colombians' problems. This trend increased with the change of government in 2018.

Implementation progress – blockages and resistance, steps forward and alternative avenues

Blockages and resistance

In 2018, Ivan Duque Marquez succeeded Juan Manuel Santos as President of Colombia following elections. Santos was a key architect of the Colombian peace accord and process. Duque is an ally of former President Alvaro Uribe, a long-term opponent of the peace process who had successfully spearheaded the campaign for a 'no' vote in the referendum to publicly ratify the peace accord. Duque's election campaign was supported by Uribe's political party, *Centro Democratico*, which has consistently criticised the peace process and the 2016 peace accord.

Participants in the workshop discussed how Duque's presidency has resisted key aspects of implementation, scaling it down from an inclusive framework to tackle key drivers of the conflict in Colombia to a much narrower agenda to end armed violence. Focus has been concentrated on demobilisation and disarmament of the FARC, at the expense of support for implementing broader change such as the reintegration of former FARC fighters' back into society, as well as other significant issues for inclusion relating to land reform, illicit crop substitution, youth and gender, delivery of social and public goods, security guarantees for social leaders, and widening participation in the democratic process.

Implementation has hit severe barriers at the local level. Participants at the workshop discussed how a culture of fear, silence and impunity continues to permeate some regions in Colombia. Women and ethnic leaders have been threatened and killed. Ambiguity and delays in the reintegration of former combatants has affected women's status in FARC communities, and female ex-combatants have been pushed into more traditional gender roles. Social leaders and former FARC members have been attacked and assassinated, and the government is accused of being slow to take preventive and judicial measures to investigate killings or prosecute perpetrators.

Implementation has been hampered by weak state capacity to deliver institutional reform. Many institutions are ill-equipped to take on reform responsibilities, in particular local and regional authorities. The Colombia peace accord does not mandate systematic reform of the security sector, police or the armed forces, beyond comparatively minor adjustments to establish elite police units or reorient the office of the attorney general in order enhance protection of social leaders.

There has been a significant drop in confidence in the peace process to tackle root causes such as illegal economies, and narcotrafficking or state weakness in Colombian borderlands.

Steps forward and alternative avenues

The first two years of implementing the 2016 peace accord in Colombia concentrated on achieving short-term commitments, such as the ceasefire, disarmament and setting up implementation support structures. Many short-term commitments were classified as completed by 2019, at which point the focus of implementation shifted to longer-term commitments, in particular those related to regions that had been most affected by the armed conflict.[36]

Despite difficulties and delays, important inclusion commitments have found their way into legislative and institutional reforms, such as gender parity in the selection of the judges and commissioners for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Truth Commission. The High Level Government Commission for Gender is the first time that all ministries in Colombia have had to be collectively accountable for how their work is supporting gender equality. This has raised government awareness of the importance of inclusion and gender in peacebuilding.

Ensuring compliance with commitments to advance gender equality is included in the mandates of verification and monitoring mechanisms, including the UN Missions as discussed above, which report on progress to the government, the FARC and other stakeholders. Women's organisations and networks have also been active in monitoring and advocating implementation, and in many instances formal and informal monitoring have collaborated to maximise their collective reach and impact.

The Colombian peace process set up a number of mechanisms to support public participation in implementation, in particular in rural areas to identify needs and draft related development plans. Communities' involvement in designing local rural development plans has helped to create a 'critical mass' of citizens advocating and liaising with local and national authorities for effective implementation. Direct participation and broad inclusion of citizens in local-level peacebuilding have tried to strengthen the political sustainability of the agreement and provide additional assurance for its implementation.

Disputes over territorial rights and land ownership intersect with gender inequalities in Colombia, and the 2016 accord includes measures to counteract women's historic exclusion from land ownership. These include redistributive measures through a Land Fund, as well as provisions for 'alternative conflict resolution mechanisms'. In 2019-20, the Ministry of Justice made headway in enacting alternative methods for conflict resolution over local land rights using a gendered approach. This progress has included designing a gender-sensitive conflict resolution toolkit, and beginning training to build capacity of local organisations that will be developing the strategy. Alternative conflict resolution mechanisms are seen locally as a means to solve 'everyday' community disputes over land ownership.[37]

Conclusion – alternative implementation avenues

Implementation of peace accords faces many blockages and significant resistance. Alternative implementation avenues can help to work around obstacles and maintain momentum, opening up parallel channels for participation, representation and influence, and reducing reliance on conflict parties' unstable hierarchies to deliver essential reforms. Informal or localised channels can help to 'decentralise' implementation when formal or national processes are stuck or have lost legitimacy. In the SRS in Ethiopia, the Joint Committee between the Ethiopian Government and the ONLF has been able to establish itself at the regional level within the SRS when progress at the federal level has been blocked. And in Afghanistan, implementation of local peace accords offered potential pathways for peacemaking while talks between the Taliban central leadership and the Afghan authorities in Kabul were faltering and, conceivably, a way of sustaining peace efforts, even after the collapse of the national process.

Combinations of bottom-up and top-down strategies can help to 'level the gender playing field' and overcome layers of resistance to gender inclusion in peace implementation. The peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC has rightly been heralded as a landmark in promoting gender equality in peacemaking. But implementation has hit obstacles, especially at local level, and in many regions women and ethnic leaders have been threatened and killed. Alternative implementation methodologies and conflict resolution mechanisms are being explored to resolve conflicts over local land rights using a gendered approach. In the SRS in Ethiopia, the largely patriarchal society makes advancing gender equality difficult. Targeted training has been helping women gain essential skills, while women across different social and political groups have also been joining together around common challenges.

Multiple monitoring mechanisms can be tailored for short- and long-term implementation objectives, and to help bridge the two. Short-term monitoring mechanisms such as to oversee ceasefires need to be 'owned' by the conflict parties to ensure the parties' accountability and help build confidence between them. Long-term mechanisms such as to oversee commitments relating to transitional justice or decentralisation may need broader participation, such as involving local civil society, or organisations representing women, young people, ethnic or indigenous groups, or victims or survivors. Multiple mechanisms have been used to oversee implementation of the 2016 Colombia peace accord – national bodies like the CSIVI; issue-specific bodies like the Special High Level Body for Ethnic Peoples; a non-governmental monitoring body, the 'Barometer Initiative'; and successive UN missions. The ongoing presence of a UN mission has facilitated achievement of the ceasefire and disarmament of the FARC, and has also provided important leverage to mitigate resistance to implementation following the change of government in Colombia in 2018.

Annex 1: Information and resources on the 2020 Joint Analysis Workshop series

A collection of relevant resources produced by the Political Settlements Research Programme is listed at the beginning of this report.

Opening session – implementing peace agreements – key trends

Panellists:

- Christine Bell, University of Edinburgh/Political Settlements Research Programme
- Madhav Joshi, Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame
- Veronique Dudouet, Berghof Foundation

Resources:

Bell, C and S Molloy (2019), *How Peace Agreements Provide for Implementation*, PA-X Report, Political Settlements Research Programme, www.politicalsettlements. org/publications-database/how-peace-agreements-provide-for-implementation/

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Afghanistan case study

Panellists:

- Michael Semple, Queen's University Belfast
- Breshna Musazai, peace activist
- Scott Smith, United States Institute for Peace
- Khalilullah Safi, peace activist and analyst
- Patricia Gossman, Human Rights Watch
- Robin Raphel, Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Resources:

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Colombia case study

Panellists:

- Borja Paladini Adell, Paladini Adell ENK Consulting

- Sergio Jaramillo Caro, Former High Commissioner for Peace, Colombia

- Rebecca Gindele, Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame

- Mariano Aguirre, Independent researcher; ex-Advisor UN Res Coordinator Office, Colombia

- Tanja Nijeijmer, ex-FARC negotiating team

- Rosa Emilia Salamanca, Corporación de investigación y acción social y económica (CIASE)

- Kristian Herbolzheimer, International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP)

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Ethiopia case study

Panellists:

- Hassan Moalim – Vice Chair, Ogaden National Liberation Front
- Mohamed Gurey – Deputy Bureau Head, Security and Justice, Somali Regional State
- Juweria Ali, University of Westminster
- Aden Abdi, Conciliation Resources

Resources:

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