

the urgency of the Fund's cross-border focus, given the transnational nature of climate-security threats. The Fund's commitment to expanding its support in prevention settings this year will further help create the conditions for sustainable peace.

To tackle the current and future multidimensional and converging threats to international peace and security, we need to reinvigorate multilateralism, with the United Nations at the center of these efforts. Effective prevention and peacebuilding require effective multilateralism that bridges peace and security, human rights and development. The Peacebuilding Commission is at the front and center of that effort. Our Office supports the Commission as a key institution within the multilateral peace and security architecture, mobilizing attention, resources, political accompaniment and sharing of experiences for better peacebuilding outcomes. This year, the Commission, with our support, will utilise a multi-country engagement format to facilitate cross-regional experience sharing on key issues related to peacebuilding. The Commission is also continuing to forge international partnerships for peacebuilding through regular exchanges with regional and subregional organizations and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and through the Commission's country and region-specific meetings, such as its recent sessions on South Sudan and Mozambique.

Strengthening partnerships of the UN with IFIs in fragile and conflict affected countries is another key component of effective multilateralism. Our Office is charged with fostering system wide engagement with the World Bank in crisis settings and has dedicated capacity to support UN-IFI partnerships, including through a small grants Facility (the "Partnership Facility") supporting joint analysis, shared data and liaison capacity. So far, 24 UN Country Offices



What does prevention look like in Mauritania?

women spoke about the transformational change they brought to their communities by implementing simple rules to lift structural barriers regarding women's participation and rights. One such rule is to ensure that each time a man speaks, a woman should have the opportunity to voice her opinion. Today, the Bassikounou network is the technical branch of the newly created Observatoire National des Droits de la Femme et de la Fille (ONDFF), making it a powerful force for gender equality in Mauritania.

I also had the honor of meeting with the Mourchidates, a group of fifty Mauritanian women religious guides, who are working tirelessly to deconstruct radical rhetoric arguments used by extremist groups in Néma, and prevent violent extremism. Their critical role in promoting peace, through an innovative pilot initiative supported by PBF and implemented by UNODC and UNESCO has been recognized by the Mauritanian Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Original Education (MAIEO), as well as by the G5 Sahel. To learn more about their impactful work, do read this story

Mauritania's mostly desert territory is highly susceptible to deforestation and drought, with temperatures regularly exceeding 40°C during the dry season from September to July. Bushfires, a frequent occurrence during this period, threaten refugees and host communities, their herds and livelihoods. I was privileged to see the achievements of the Mbera fire brigade volunteers and to hear from the national local authorities and host communities their appreciation of the brigade in extinguishing the fires

PEACEBUILDING STORIES

dream, because of poverty. It was a very difficult

says Iris, a migrant from Honduras.

Forced to settle in Esquipulas, a municipality in Guatemala, Iris is just one of many Central Americans who have migrated in search of better opportunities and safety. Esquipulas, which is situated on a major migratory route 10 kilometers from the Guatemalan-Honduran border, has seen an alarming surge in

bo

Iris accomplished her dream of starting her own business with the help of the course.

confidence to work and charge for my work. With

Miriam, another Honduran student who took the course, has expanded the services she provides at her beauty salon. She said,

opportunities for foreigners. It's hard to find a job

These courses have not only improved access to job opportunities and entrepreneurship, but also helped integrate the migrant population into the community. The project created spaces for locals and foreigners to interact, share their stories, and build social bonds. Understanding and tolerance of others increased, while discrimination and stigmas against migrants diminished.

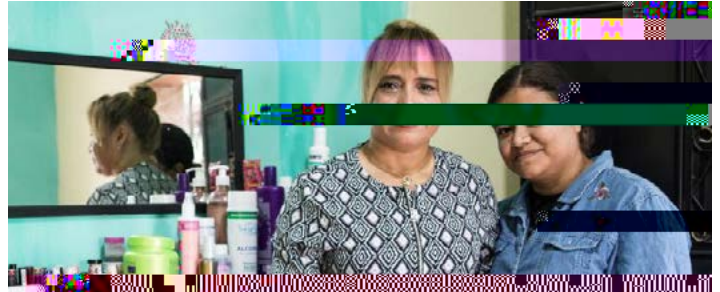
said Cristina Vásquez, a Guatemalan student.

The inclusion and integration of migrants had a positive impact on host communities, including increased



cultural diversity, socio-political participation, and economic development.

Damaris Moscoso, Coordinator of the Municipal Directorate for Women in Esquipulas, said



Through 10 multi-stakeholder platforms, coordination has been enhanced between government institutions and civil society organizations across three countries. This has strengthened the focus on the needs of vulnerable populations affected by human mobility. Seven initiatives, including joint care protocols, have been approved.

Two regulatory and legislative reforms have been approved in Honduras and El Salvador, and one in Guatemala, which includes the prevention of forced displacement and the protection of victims of forced displacement. These new frameworks will contribute to institutional changes, enabling a comprehensive and articulated approach to addressing the needs of people in mobility and promoting their social and economic integration.

The three governments are working together more effectively by sharing information and analysis to identify joint strategies. As a result, they have identified seven specific areas for coordination, including the sustainable reintegration of returned migrants and, providing assistance to those with protection needs, such as victims of human trafficking, and migrant smuggling.

The 'Hearts in Movement' communications campaign has successfully promoted respect for the dignity and human rights of those affected by human mobility across the three countries. The campaign aims to counteract discrimination, xenophobia, stigma, and exclusion faced by these populations. It has been adopted at the local level and has reinforced solidarity and empathy between host communities, migrants and refugees in the region, leading to improved social harmony and integration.

Taking the vocational course has inspired Iris to think about her future. She said, about five years, is to set up my academy, to help



hold significant influence in shaping attitudes,

This network of exceptional women empowers others by offering them tools to combat radicalization. So far, the Mourchidates have educated over 7,636 individuals including 4,667 women and 2,969 men in Néma (bordering with Mali), in Selibaby (near the border with Senegal and Mali), Rosso (bordering with Senegal), Bir Mogreihm (bordering with Algéria) and the capital Nouakchott.

were once excluded from decision-making are now involved and valued.

Mouna Bint Alban, a 24-year-old Mourchidate from Nouakchott says,

Mariem Ali, a Mourchidate from Néma, said,

traditionally been fulfilled by Mauritanian women.

youth who trust and confide in us. This responsibility

impact on our community in Néma
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By providing an alternative discourse to violent radicalism, these brave women deconstructed the radical rhetoric of extremist groups using religious arguments, leaving a lasting impact on those they met.

Mariya Bousneine, a Mourchidate from Trarza further adds,

The Mourchidates have a crucial role in preventing extremism. They work in places like mosques, prisons, youth centers, hospitals and schools to promote a tolerant form of Islam and work to dismantle misunderstandings. While their main focus is prevention, they also step in to handle more serious cases. When issues fall outside their religious expertise, they refer people to the appropriate authorities.

Women's participation has been effective in managing conflicts and their presence has been recognized by everyone involved. The Mourchidates initiative has helped women share their knowledge with other women, and now they feel more comfortable expressing their views in public. More women can now openly talk about preventing violent extremism, gender equality, women's roles in military and security professions, and the criminal justice system. The project has helped shift attitudes as women who



Despite facing significant political and social challenges, The Gambia has undergone a process of democratic transition, with a new government committed to promoting transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. As part of this transition, the country is engaging in transitional justice to address past human rights abuses and promote healing.

The United Nations has supported The Gambia's prioritization of transitional justice by utilizing complementary approaches, including the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and the Partnership Facility in the Peacebuilding Support Office.

The PBF has invested \$30.9 million across 16 initiatives since 2017 in the Gambia. As an early supporter of the transition, the PBF quickly financed security sector reform and transitional justice actions. For instance, UNDP and OHCHR worked together to assist the government in establishing credible transitional justice processes.

Responding to the Gambians' national priorities for justice, the support by the UN laid the foundation for establishing two major institutions: The National Human Rights Commission and the Truth, Reconciliation and

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and Minister of Justice of The Gambia, a civil society representative and senior UN officials provided an update on the priority areas and related actions on the implementation of the TRRC recommendations.

The PBC commended The Gambia's remarkable progress in transitional justice, while underscoring the need to implement the TRRC recommendations as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable and inclusive peace, development, and stability. Key priority initiatives and support needs were addressed, including establishing a Peace and Reconciliation Commission and providing support to the victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Members of the PBC underlined the imperative to reinforce capacity-building and strengthen national institutions to support the TRRC recommendations, including in the security sector, legislative and economic reforms. They committed to sustaining international support for the country's peacebuilding priorities.

Furthermore, to support the government address the root causes of fragility and conflict and ensure a sustainable political transition after 22 years of authoritarian rule, the World Bank has approved a Turn Around Allocation (TAA). Under the TAA, the Government has identified five strategic objectives, including security and political stability, governance and transitional justice, land management, environment and climate change, human capital development and inclusive growth and economic stability. The UN and the Bank have agreed to work together and support the Government to achieve these objectives. The Partnership Facility is supporting the design and implementation of a joint UN-World Bank mechanism to facilitate UN support to the Government's implementation of its TAA, with a focus



A recently completed peacebuilding initiative implemented by UNDP, IOM and UNFPA and financed by the PBF provided holistic support to communities in Madagascar's Great South by addressing some of the underlying factors contributing to instability.

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To address critical gaps in security needs in the region, the peacebuilding project worked closely with the government to strengthen the presence of gendarmerie security bases by setting up additional posts in strategic locations, providing greater coverage. Eleven gendarmerie outposts were constructed and equipped in areas of high insecurity, including five through this project by IOM. These security posts were equipped with much-needed technology, such as

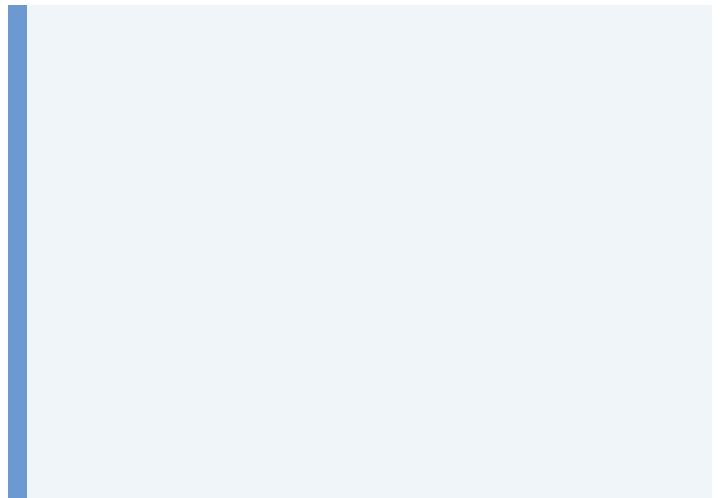
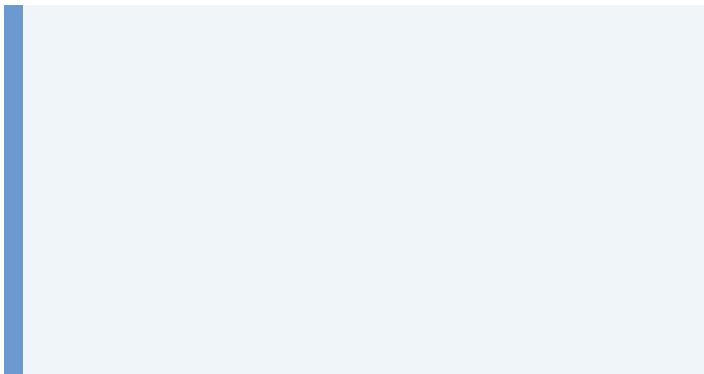
Featured Partners

As Croatia has just taken on the role as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its 17th session, they have reaffirmed their commitment to coherent approaches to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Croatia has emphasized the need to foster partnerships with governments, regional and sub-regional organizations, and civil society organizations. They have also underscored the need to ensure flexibility in the work of the Commission with a view to increasing outreach and interactions, and to ensuring that the Commission can further strengthen its advisory role to the Security Council and continue to provide a platform that countries can use to share good practices in peacebuilding.

As the PBC recently approved its programme of work for 2023, Croatia is keen to ensure that the activities of the Commission can have an impact on the lives of people

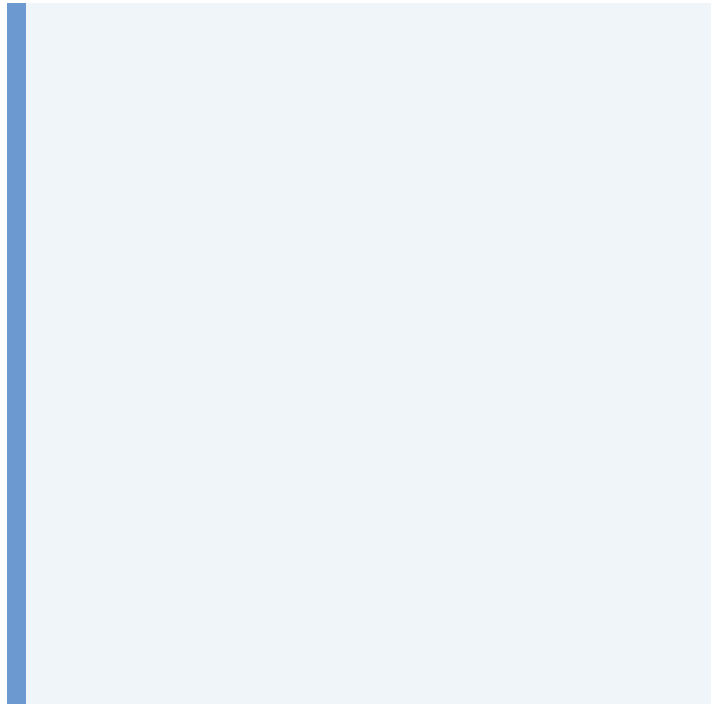
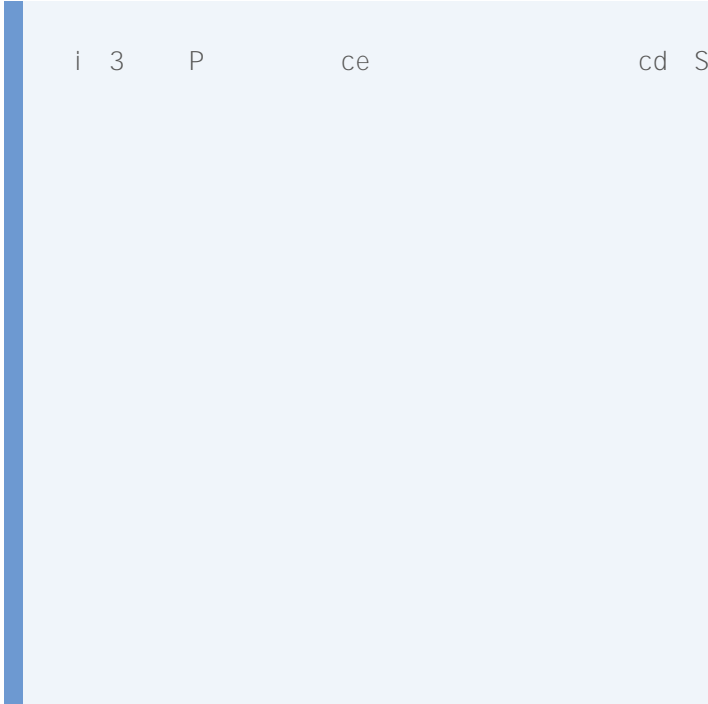
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Ireland is one of the top donors to the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) supporting flexible investments in peacebuilding initiatives in conflict-affected areas globally, with a strong focus on empowering women and youth, and on sustaining peace in UN transitions. As one of the earliest supporters of the PBF, Ireland has contributed over \$31 million since the Fund's inception. The Peacebuilding Fund is grateful to the Government of Ireland for a new contribution of \$3.2 million in 2023 for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, in addition to the \$7.4 million already contributed to the Fund's current Strategy 2020-24.

The PBF works in a coherent manner with Ireland's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. For example, in Liberia, the PBF supports initiatives to ensure increased participation by women in all dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms and contribute to a positive change in the mindsets of communities about women's rights to land and property ownership. As a long-standing global champion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, Ireland shares the PBF's important commitment to gender equality, advocating for strengthening women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding. 3 Pe



Partner Country Visits

UN Delegation Visits the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Elizabeth Spehar visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 8 – 13 February with a delegation from UN headquarters comprising also Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Martha Pobe, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions Alexandre Zouev, and UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, Ahunna Eziakonwa. The World Bank and representatives of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region also joined the delegation.

The Chair and the Assistant Secretary-General heard from three young graduates directly, who attested to how the project helped them to recognize their potential and supported them in enhancing their leadership skills and competencies. The graduates described the social and cultural barriers to gender equality in Guinea-Bissau and described the ongoing challenges faced by women and girls in the country, including discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence. The young women informed that the program helped them to adopt a gender-sensitive lens, gain self-esteem and self-confidence, and become more aware of their rights and duties. The graduates expressed their determination to teach others what they learned and to promote gender equality and female leadership, which left the delegation confident in the positive impact they will make in their communities and beyond.

Peacebuilding Fund's Partners Visit Honduras



To highlight the impact of the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund's support to Honduras, the Peacebuilding Support Office organized a donor visit from 13-17 March. Participants included representatives from Germany, Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The participants met with the Foreign Minister, Minister of Human Rights and other senior officials from justice and environment ministries, as well as the UN Country Team and other counterparts. Meetings reviewed the peacebuilding context in Honduras and the Fund's contributions to the prevention of violence and land conflict, human rights, women's empowerment, the fight against corruption, the protection of vulnerable populations especially youth and mobile populations and the rule of law. The partners also explored opportunities to deepen peacebuilding collaboration, including plans for engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. During the visit, the partners interacted with local authorities and communities in Tegucigalpa, La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula and visited PBF-funded investments implemented by FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UN Women, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC and WFP. The visit provided an opportunity to meet with civil society representatives, women and