

At the forefront of developing new insights into peacebuilding

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The contribution of economic, social and cultural rights to sustaining global peace is largely overlooked within new developments to tackle violent conflict, says new research led by Lancaster University.

Such conflict is surging after decades of relative decline and direct deaths in war. Refugee numbers, military spending, and terrorist incidents have all reached historic highs in recent years, according to the new UN/World Bank study 'Pathways to Peace'.

Researchers say the advent of the new 'Sustaining Peace' approach, outlined by the UN Secretary General, and the 'Transforming Our World 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', present an opportune time to examine the role of human rights as an 'essential' to both sustainable peace and sustainable development.

And their new study, entitled 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Sustaining Peace: An Introduction' highlights the importance of economic, social and cultural rights to improve the success of conflict prevention, peace-making, transitional justice and post-conflict peacebuilding.

The report says that to achieve sustainable peace within societies, peacebuilding measures must address the protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights at all stages of peacebuilding processes - from prevention of destructive conflict, including early warning, through to post-conflict peacebuilding actions.

Key recommendations in the report, undertaken jointly by academics and NGOs, include:

- The mainstreaming of economic, social and cultural rights within all pillars of the UN system and more widely within other international organisations and civil society
- Using existing International Human Rights Law to provide a framework for using economic, social and cultural rights (as well as civil and political rights) to enable peacebuilding. The existing framework provides a legal basis, clear obligations, and indicators and benchmarks for the management and prioritisation of resources to meet basic rights.
- Operationalising economic, social and cultural rights for peacebuilding on the ground through a rights-based approach to development and using an economic, social and cultural rights framework to assist with capacity building through participation, training and institutional reform.

Dr Amanda Cahill-Ripley, who led the research team, said: "The research is ground-breaking and offers a new perspective on sustaining peace which is vital to its success. It is extremely important to tackle economic, social and cultural rights violations as they are often the root causes of [violent conflict](#) or are a result of direct and deliberate violence.

"Further, they can act as ongoing grievances within conflict-affected settings during transitional or post-conflict periods.

"Consequently, such injustices need to be addressed to build and sustain a peaceful society. There is a need for stakeholders to consider the concrete steps that can be taken to this end. On-going research, knowledge exchange, cooperation, collaboration and sharing good practices amongst all stakeholders is imperative to further developing thinking, policy and practice on this crucial topic."

Dr Amanda Cahill-Ripley, from Lancaster University's Law School, and colleague Karol Balfe, the Head of Tackling Violence and Building Peace for Christian Aid Ireland, presented their research to the 63rd Session of UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the principle international human rights treaty body concerned with protecting and promoting economic, social and cultural rights at the United Nations.

The briefing, jointly organised with project partners Freidrich Ebert Stiftung and hosted by the UN CESCR Secretariat, was attended by committee members, invited NGOs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Team.

More information: [wp.lancs.ac.uk/escr-peacebuild ... eace-Report-2018.pdf](http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/escr-peacebuild...eace-Report-2018.pdf)

Provided by Lancaster University

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