

STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICTS: UNITED NATIONS PERSPECTIVE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11394067>

Abstract. “This topic provides an overview of the strategies and techniques employed by the United Nations to address conflicts around the world. It discusses preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding, and other techniques used by the UN to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. The UN's strategies are based on the principles of impartiality, consent, and the use of force only as a last resort.”

Keywords: Preventative and proactive conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation and post-conflict reconstruction, Basic Needs Theory, preventative diplomacy, second-generation peacekeeping operations, mutual problem sharing between India and Bangladesh.

СТРАТЕГИИ И МЕТОДЫ РАЗРЕШЕНИЯ КОНФЛИКТОВ: ВЗГЛЯД ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ

Аннотация. «Эта тема представляет собой обзор стратегий и методов, используемых Организацией Объединенных Наций для разрешения конфликтов по всему миру. В нем обсуждаются превентивная дипломатия, миротворческие операции, миростроительство и другие методы, используемые ООН для предотвращения, управления и разрешения конфликтов. Стратегии ООН основаны на принципах беспристрастности, согласия и применения силы только в крайнем случае».

Ключевые слова: превентивное и упреждающее разрешение конфликтов, управление конфликтами, трансформация конфликта и постконфликтное восстановление, теория основных потребностей, превентивная дипломатия, миротворческие операции второго поколения, взаимное разделение проблем между Индией и Бангладеш.

The United Nations (UN) plays a vital role in addressing conflicts around the world. It has developed a range of strategies and techniques to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. The UN was founded on October 24, 1945, with the primary goal of maintaining international peace and security, which remains a cornerstone of its mission. The organization has consistently employed various approaches and methods for conflict resolution, as outlined in different articles of the UN Charter such as Article 1, Article 33, Chapter VI, and Chapter VII, along with utilizing resources from bodies like the General Assembly and the Secretary-General.

Various conflict resolution techniques have been applied based on specific contexts and ground realities. These strategies often intersect, complement, and strengthen each other, enhancing their overall effectiveness in promoting peace and resolving conflicts holistically.

The UN's strategy for conflict prevention has progressed over time. Notably, resolutions from the General Assembly and Security Council in 2016 focused on "sustaining peace." These resolutions emphasize the use of structural and diplomatic measures to prevent tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflicts. Key measures include providing timely information for crisis prevention, de-escalating hostilities before violence erupts, enhancing mediation and negotiation capabilities, establishing formal and informal communication channels between conflicting parties, conducting fact-finding missions for humanitarian aid and assistance, exploring non-violent conflict resolution methods, containing ongoing conflicts to prevent their spread, and deterring the resurgence of violence.

“The aim [of conflict prevention] must be to create a synergy with those civil society groups that are bridge-builders, truthfinders, watchdogs, human rights defenders, and agents of social protection and economic revitalisation.” - UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan quoted in The Washington Times, 23 June 2004

In 1992, the United Nations successfully implemented preventive action in Macedonia by deploying peacekeepers along the borders with Serbia. Additionally, a civilian unit monitored early signs of conflict and engaged in preventive diplomacy to address escalating tensions among ethnic groups within the country. This proactive approach included various civil society efforts such as inter-community dialogues, promoting tolerance through radio and television programs, and democratizing the media.

To further enhance conflict prevention strategies, it is essential to implement more proactive measures such as early warning systems, information gathering, and in-depth analysis of the underlying drivers of conflicts.

Categorizing Conflict Prevention approaches into two types can provide a comprehensive understanding:

1. Direct Conflict Prevention:

- Focuses on addressing immediate and instant causes of conflict.
- Involves tactical and operational measures.
- Examples include sending high-level diplomatic missions to mediate between parties and deploying peacekeeping missions.
- Forceful methods like economic sanctions, inducements, disarmament, and deployment of peacekeeping missions are used.

2. Indirect Conflict Prevention:

- Addresses root causes and structural needs based on John Burton's Basic Needs theory.
- Involves basic and evolving measures.
- Strategies include using good offices, negotiation, mediation, special political missions, protecting human rights and minority rights, promoting non-violent responses to conflicts, involving women and civil society.
- This type of prevention focuses on an ongoing peacebuilding process that continues even after the UN Peacekeeping mission ends.

By employing a combination of direct and indirect conflict prevention strategies, including both immediate interventions and long-term structural changes, the international community can work towards sustainable peace and stability in conflict-affected regions.

Conflict Management aims to restrict or regulate conflicts, even though it serves as a short-term solution, it can impact the potential for long-term settlement and resolution of conflicts. At times, these restrictive measures can solidify the status quo of the conflict, making it challenging for conflicting parties to progress towards new reconciliations. An example of this is the Cyprus Conflict, where the UNFICYP Peacekeeping Mission has been stationed since 27th March 1964, yet no resolution seems imminent. Despite some success in humanitarian and non-military areas, a political stalemate persists.

In contrast, Conflict Resolution, which is based on mutual problem sharing needs, aims for a more comprehensive process with the potential for permanent and long-term efficacy. This approach can provide a win-win situation for the conflicting parties. The UN continues to play a crucial role in international conflict resolution, with 14 ongoing peacekeeping operations and a total of 71 deployed since 1948. In 2019, the Secretary-General launched the Action for Peacekeeping Initiative (A4P) to renew mutual political commitment to peacekeeping operations.

The evolution of peacekeeping over the years has shifted from primarily military observation of ceasefires and separation of forces after inter-state wars to a more complex model involving military, police, and civilian elements working together to lay the foundations for sustainable peace. This transformative role of second-generation peacekeeping operations helps facilitate political processes, assist in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants, organize elections, and promote human rights.

Notable instances of UN mediation efforts include Iran's acceptance of UN Resolution 598 as the basis for talks with Iraq to end the Iran-Iraq war, the Angola-Namibia-South Africa Resolution 435 calling for a ceasefire, a UN peacekeeping force, and UN-sponsored elections in Namibia, as well as the UN-brokered peace plan in Western Sahara calling for a ceasefire and referendum.

Several successful peacekeeping operations include those in Cambodia (UNTAC), El Salvador (ONUSAL), Guatemala (MINUGUA), Mozambique (ONUMOZ), Namibia (UNTAG), and Tajikistan (UNMOT), which have played pivotal roles in maintaining peace, ending armed conflicts, organizing elections, and monitoring peace agreements during and after civil wars.

Conflict Transformation and Post-Conflict Rebuilding & Reconstruction involve establishing conditions that support sustainable peace to flourish. Efforts in post-reconstruction development, such as ongoing engagement with local communities and fostering dialogue, are essential for preventing a relapse into conflict. These continuous processes and commitments to reconciliation are fundamental for long-lasting peace and development. John Paul Lederach emphasized a transformation-oriented approach that focuses on reconciliation within society.

In Liberia, the UN Peacekeeping Mission, UNMIL, successfully completed its 15-year mission. However, various UN agencies like the UN Development Programmes, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme continued their presence in the country to support post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts. Following successful disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reintegration processes, and peaceful elections, UNMIL shifted its focus to providing security, assisting in building new military and police forces, and extending civil authority across the nation. Technical and logistical support was provided to government departments by UNMIL. Countries like Sierra Leone, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste,

Liberia, Haiti, and Kosovo have been guided towards normal development through basic security provision, assistance in political transitions, and establishment of new state institutions.

India and Bangladesh have made significant contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations as top-ranking troop contributors. Together they have deployed about 11,853 troops out of a total of 82,245 as of June 30th, 2020. India has been the largest troop contributor to UN missions since their inception, participating in 49 missions with over 240,000 troops and police personnel. However, this commitment has come at a cost, with both countries having lost peacekeepers in the line of duty more than any other member states.

While the United Nations has made progress in utilizing measures like preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, and peace maintenance activities in recent years, there are numerous challenges. Some peacekeeping operations have faced difficulties and conflicts persist in regions like the Israeli Occupation, Cambodia Violence, Somalia, Rwanda, and Darfur Conflict in Sudan. To enhance its effectiveness in Conflict Resolution, restructuring and reform within the UN are crucial. Suggestions include expanding Security Council Permanent Members to include rising democratic powers like India, Japan, Brazil, and Germany; reevaluating the Veto system; increasing regional representation; and improving transparency in the administration and functioning of the UN. As the UN celebrates its 75th Anniversary, member nations should unite to demand restructuring for a more equitable and just system based on equality, representation, and multilateralism.

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