

# Executive summary

The 2025 comprehensive review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (PBAR) presents a crucial opportunity to strengthen global peacebuilding efforts. This review comes at a pivotal moment, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, the implementation of the *Pact for the Future*, the fourth Financing for Development Conference, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. These milestones provide a unique occasion to reassess progress, enhance multilateral cooperation, and address persistent gaps in peacebuilding effectiveness.

However, it also takes place amid global crises, including the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, which challenge the rules-based international order based on the UN Charter. The number and level of armed conflicts have surged to a record high, causing humanitarian crises, regional instability, and worsening socioeconomic conditions. Climate change further fuels conflict through resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and displacement, intensifying global security risks.

At the centre of this review is the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a key UN body responsible for advising, coordinating, and mobilising support for peacebuilding efforts primarily in conflict-affected and fragile states. Since its establishment in 2005, the PBC has evolved significantly but still faces structural, political, and financial constraints that limit its impact. This report examines the PBC's evolution, challenges, and opportunities within the broader UN peacebuilding framework and proposes a set of forward-looking recommendations to enhance its effectiveness.

## Key Findings and Challenges

Over the past two decades, the UN's peacebuilding efforts have undergone major transformations, reflected in the 2010, 2015, and 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Reviews, the Sustaining Peace resolutions, and the

integration of peacebuilding into global policy frameworks and their implementation such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Despite these efforts, the global peace and security landscape has deteriorated, with the number of armed conflicts reaching historic highs, the situation is exacerbated by geopolitical tensions, economic fragility, and the increasing impact of climate change on security.

The PBC, while recognised as an important part of UN peacebuilding, continues to face three core challenges:

- **Limited influence within the UN System:** The PBC's advisory role, particularly in relation to the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the UN Development System, remains underutilised. Its ability to shape UN peacebuilding strategies is constrained by limited political leverage and fragmented institutional linkages.
- **Inadequate and unpredictable financing:** The UN Peacebuilding Fund remains reliant on voluntary contributions, creating financial instability. Calls for assessed contributions to ensure sustained funding for peacebuilding have yet to gain broad political support, leaving the PBC without the necessary resources to drive long-term initiatives.
- **Weak coordination and partnerships:** While the PBC has engaged with international financial institutions, regional organisations, and civil society, these interactions remain ad hoc and lack the strategic coherence needed to mobilise resources and ensure sustained peacebuilding impact. The PBC's engagement in peacekeeping mission drawdowns and other transition settings also remains underdeveloped.

## Ten areas for strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission

To address these challenges, this report identifies ten areas of change for strengthening the PBC's role in advancing sustainable peace presented in terms of the desired outcome:

- 1 The PBC has a stronger advisory role:** The PBC must strengthen its engagement with the Security Council and the General Assembly, ensuring that its recommendations influence peacebuilding-related mandates and funding allocations. A more structured approach is needed to align PBC's advice with Security Council decision-making, including on mission transitions. Additionally, the PBC should provide targeted peacebuilding advice to the General Assembly's committees, particularly on conflict prevention and financing.
- 2 The PBC effectively promotes coherence in the UN's engagements in peacebuilding and prevention:** To enhance coherence, the PBC should strengthen its engagement with UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams to ensure peacebuilding is prioritised in national and regional strategies. Establishing closer linkages with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) will help integrate peacebuilding perspectives into humanitarian, development, and peace operations.
- 3 The PBC actively and strategically engages in UN mission settings:** The PBC should play a stronger role in supporting UN mission transitions, ensuring that peacekeeping withdrawals do not create instability. This requires structured engagement with the Security Council, DPO, and host governments. The PBC could also oversee the development of light footprint missions to sustain political and peacebuilding efforts post-transition.
- 4 The PBC effectively leverages its convening role across the UN system:** The PBC should use its convening power to align peacebuilding priorities across UN entities, financial institutions, and Member States. This includes holding more systematic dialogues

with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and regional development actors.

- 5 The PBC successfully fosters and strengthens partnerships for peacebuilding:** The PBC must deepen its engagement with international financial institutions (World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Regional Development Banks) and regional organisations. This includes advocating for dedicated financing for peacebuilding within development funding mechanisms and strengthening collaboration on joint programming for fragile and conflict-affected states.
- 6 The PBC effectively advocates for and facilitates timely resource mobilisation for peacebuilding:** Peacebuilding financing remains unpredictable and insufficient. The PBC should advocate for increased voluntary and assessed contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and explore innovative financing models, including partnerships with the private sector and blended finance initiatives.
- 7 The PBC actively supports the development of National Prevention and Peacebuilding Strategies:** The PBC should assist Member States in developing and implementing national prevention strategies, ensuring that peacebuilding efforts are aligned with national development priorities. This requires more systematic engagement with Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, and local peacebuilding actors.
- 8 The PBC constructively advances cross-cutting issues in UN Peacebuilding efforts:** The PBC should mainstream gender equality, climate-related security risks, and youth inclusion in all peacebuilding initiatives. This includes integrating Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) commitments across PBC's engagements and ensuring climate security is a core consideration in conflict prevention strategies.
- 9 The PBC communicates effectively about its role, activities, and the impact of its work:** Stronger outreach and strategic communication are needed to enhance the visibility and influence of the PBC. The Commission should develop a comprehensive

communications strategy, highlighting its successes and the tangible impact of peacebuilding efforts. This includes engaging with media, academia, and civil society organisations to expand global support for peacebuilding initiatives.

#### **10 The PBC has adequate capacity to fulfil its mandate:**

The PBC's operational capacity must be strengthened through increased Secretariat support and dedicated resources. This includes expanding PBSO's analytical capabilities, increasing staffing levels, and improving data collection and monitoring mechanisms to inform evidence-based policymaking.

Each *Area of Change* in the report is framed with a strategic and results-oriented approach. It begins with a desired outcome statement, outlining the intended impact of the proposed change. This is followed by a brief analysis of challenges and rationale, identifying key gaps, structural obstacles, or opportunities for reform. Finally, each section presents specific recommendations and actions to enhance the PBC's effectiveness.

Annexes 3-7 present original text from select resolutions and other documents for easy reference.

### **Conclusions and a call to action**

The 2025 PBAR represents a critical moment for enhancing the UN's peacebuilding efforts. As conflicts intensify and multilateralism is challenged, it is imperative to reinforce the role of the PBC and ensure that it becomes a more strategic, well-resourced, and impactful entity.

Not all recommendations need inclusion in PBAR resolutions; many can be implemented through PBC leadership, procedural adjustments and action. A structured approach is needed to organise and cluster recommendations from various sources, building on previous and ongoing efforts in this regard. The focus must be on implementation, ensuring concrete actions that drive meaningful, sustainable progress at the country level.

The key priorities for action in the 2025 PBAR should focus on:

- **Securing stronger political commitments** from UN Member States to enhance the PBC's advisory role and ensure greater coherence in peacebuilding policies.

- **Ensuring the effective implementation** of the Pact for the Future's commitments on peacebuilding, leveraging the momentum of the Summit of the Future and the 2025 Financing for Development Conference and the upcoming 2025 peacekeeping summit in Berlin.

- **Advancing discussions on sustainable financing mechanisms**, including the potential for increasing assessed contributions for the UN's peacebuilding architecture.

- **Strengthening the PBC's partnerships** with international financial institutions, regional actors, and civil society to improve coordinated peacebuilding efforts.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a unique mechanism within the UN system with important advantage – it already exists and does not need to be created. The PBC is well-positioned to advise and implement peacebuilding with and in Member States and through UN entities. To fulfil its potential, its advisory role must be recognised and utilised, engagement systems established, and operational capacity adequately resourced with strategic financial support. By seizing the opportunity presented by the 2025 PBAR, Member States can reinforce the PBC's role in sustaining peace, preventing conflict, and fostering long-term stability in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.