



Country of Focus: South Sudan

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an intergovernmental advisory body of the United Nations, created in 2005 to strengthen international efforts in assisting countries transitioning from conflict to peace. Its mandate is to prevent the recurrence of violence, support institution-building, and ensure that peacebuilding efforts are sustainable in the long term. Unlike the Security Council, which can authorize military interventions or impose sanctions, the PBC functions as a platform for coordination. It brings together UN organs, donor states, regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions, and civil society actors to align resources and strategies. By doing so, it bridges the gap between immediate post-conflict recovery and long-term development, ensuring that peace efforts go beyond security to include governance, social, and economic dimensions.

In the case of South Sudan, the world's youngest nation since its independence in 2011, the PBC plays a vital role in addressing the country's fragile post-conflict environment. Years of civil war have left deep divisions, widespread displacement, and weakened state institutions. While the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement represented an important step toward peace, the country still struggles with violence, humanitarian crises, food insecurity, and governance challenges. The PBC's work therefore emphasizes reconciliation among communities, strengthening of state structures, and building trust between citizens and government institutions. Peacebuilding in South Sudan is not only about preventing the resurgence of armed conflict, but also about tackling root causes such as inequality, ethnic tensions, and lack of access to basic services, which remain central to ensuring long-term stability.

Topic I: Preventing future conflicts through education and dialogue

South Sudan faces one of the world's lowest literacy rates, with only about 34% of the population able to read and write, and women disproportionately affected by limited access to education. Decades of conflict have devastated the country's education system, destroying school infrastructure, displacing teachers and students, and leaving many communities without functioning learning spaces or adequate resources. Even where schools exist, they often struggle with a shortage of trained educators, lack of materials, and unsafe conditions that prevent children from attending regularly. Beyond the structural challenges, South Sudan's deep ethnic and communal divisions continue to undermine social cohesion, as grievances and mistrust are passed on through generations. When these divisions are not addressed through education and inclusive dialogue, they risk perpetuating cycles of violence and instability. Expanding access to

quality education and embedding peacebuilding principles into curricula therefore represent critical steps toward reconciliation, national unity, and the prevention of future conflict.

Questions to consider:

1. How can education be used to promote reconciliation and reduce ethnic tensions?
2. What role should youth, women, and traditional leaders play in peace dialogues?
3. How can international partners support education reform in conflict-affected areas?

Topic II: Improving access to basic services

South Sudan consistently ranks among the lowest countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), reflecting the severe challenges its population faces in meeting even the most basic needs for survival and well-being. Years of conflict and instability have left essential services such as clean water, healthcare, food security, and reliable infrastructure either absent or extremely limited, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. Many communities depend on long and unsafe journeys to access water sources, healthcare facilities are under-equipped and understaffed, and recurring food shortages leave millions vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. These structural weaknesses are further compounded by mass displacement, as millions of South Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes due to violence, straining host communities and increasing reliance on international humanitarian assistance. Today, the majority of the population depends heavily on aid provided by the United Nations, NGOs, and international partners, yet this external support is often unstable and insufficient, highlighting the urgent need to improve access to basic services as part of sustainable peacebuilding and development.

Questions to consider:

1. Which basic services should be prioritized for immediate improvement?
2. How can international aid be better coordinated with South Sudanese institutions?
3. How can improved service delivery restore trust in government structures?

Topic III: Strengthening local governance and the rule of law in post-conflict areas

South Sudan's fragile peace process is severely undermined by weak state institutions, widespread corruption, and a limited rule of law, which together prevent the government from providing effective governance and justice for its citizens. In many parts of the country, disputes over land ownership, cattle, and natural resources remain flashpoints for violence, as the absence of strong legal frameworks and trusted judicial mechanisms leaves communities with little recourse other than taking justice into their own hands. This cycle of unresolved grievances fuels intercommunal clashes, displacement, and further instability, eroding public trust in state

authorities. Strengthening the rule of law and promoting inclusive governance are therefore essential for consolidating peace, not only by improving accountability and reducing corruption at the national level, but also by empowering local governance structures to manage disputes fairly and transparently. Building a functional justice system that incorporates both formal institutions and respected customary practices will be key to preventing a relapse into conflict and ensuring long-term stability in South Sudan.

Questions to consider:

1. How can South Sudan strengthen accountability and reduce corruption?
2. What mechanisms can ensure local communities are represented in governance?
3. How can the rule of law be reinforced in areas recovering from conflict?