

## **Resilience in the Context of Peacebuilding**

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This presentation reflects on resilience in the context of peacebuilding with examples from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), and Afghanistan. It argues that the international community (IC) may achieve more in peacebuilding by nurturing or strengthening resilience of people who seek peace in conflict-affected society, rather than solely focusing on obstructive force. The working definition of resilience in this presentation is an ability of individuals, a community, or a society to recover from or adjust to the damage caused by a violent conflict.

The peacebuilding of BH is known for IC's strong presence. There have been IC's constant struggle against the local elites who tried to preserve the division of the country. In retrospect, we may note that the IC's attention was paid mostly to suppression of divisive force rather than to supporting efforts for coexistence. The local media were filled with divisive statements of the local elites, while voice of those who tried to recreate community of coexistence had no place to be heard. As a result, twenty-two years since the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, the strong divisive force limits the growth of grass-roots resilience.

In Afghanistan, women's rights issue was used as a justification of the foreign intervention. Within peacebuilding activities, gender mainstream led to such agenda as political participation of women, and recruitment and training of women for police force. However, the Afghan society shows fierce resistance to accelerated empowerment of women as exemplified by murder of female politicians and policewomen. While empowerment of women is important, the first step for transformation of the society towards peacebuilding may be to support strengthening their resilience, since they do have their own role inside the household and influence over male family members.

The liberal peacebuilding has been criticized for its western model approach, and led to the emergence of post-liberal peacebuilding which underlines the importance of "everyday". Likewise peace from below receives increasing support among scholars and practitioners. These standpoints, together with the resilience discourse, commonly recognize the importance of the local capability in peacebuilding. In order to strengthen resilience, rights-based approach can be applied in peacebuilding so that the factors which hamper human rights realization will be identified. It is likely that they are also curtailing resilience of the same society.