



Christian Aid — 2016

Christian Aid Tackling Violence, Building Peace Global Strategy

2016

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Christian Aid Ireland
Canal House, Canal Road
Dublin 6. Ireland.

dublin@christian-aid.org
belfast@christian-aid.org

www.christianaid.ie

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Preface

Violence and conflict affects almost one fifth of the world's population or 1.5 billion people. The daily fear, uncertainty and suffering borne by people living through violent conflicts in countries such as Syria, Iraq and South Sudan is immeasurable and unimaginable.

The war in Syria, which is nearing its sixth year, has contributed to the highest number of displaced people since World War II; nearly five million having fled its bombs and bullets. Meanwhile, the catastrophe continues for people trapped in besieged villages across Syria and Iraq. Other countries like Colombia are striving to end protracted conflicts and push peace over the line.

Today, one in every 122 people is now a refugee, internally displaced or seeking asylum, and the cost of world military spending is said to be nearly 250 times more than is spent on peace building.

Christian Aid has adopted 'Tackling Violence, Building Peace,' as a strategic priority to address these critical trends and because we know that human development cannot be achieved without tackling violence.

Seventy years after Christian Aid's establishment, the root causes and levels of violence in poor communities where we work persists, often at higher levels and irrespective of whether those communities are 'at war' or not.

Most of the world's poorest people live outside of any form of protection and remain vulnerable to war and conflict, violent criminal organisations, gender-based

violence, police abuse, forced labour and violent theft of land and other assets on a daily basis.

People who do not have a safe place to call home, reliable access to food and an income because of violence, cannot plan for the future. Communities living through daily violence cannot thrive. And children who are forced to leave school because of violence are denied a chance at their hopes and dreams. Women and girls are also increasingly subject to physical and sexual violence, a harrowing result of gender inequality.

Conflict is complex and even when peace comes, it does not always signal an end to violence. It can mark a shift from militarised conflict to widespread social conflict. For example, in Central America more people die violently today due to crime than during the civil wars of Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua combined.

Our new strategy underpins our commitment to tackle violence and to promote just and lasting peace and security where we work. The strategy is deeply informed by our work in countries across the globe and reflects the aspirations and vision of our local partners.

Peace is both an end in itself and a prerequisite for development. 'Tackling Violence, Building Peace' is our pledge to work tirelessly and collectively towards a safer future that secures justice and human rights for all.

Rosamond Bennett
CEO, Christian Aid Ireland
2016

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Introduction

While some regions in the world enjoy peace and security, one and a half billion people live in areas affected by fragility, conflict, or large-scale criminal violence. These countries typically have the highest poverty rates¹ and are seemingly trapped in endless cycles of violence and conflict. Sustainable Development Goal 16 on 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions' recognises that this is not inevitable and acknowledges that without tackling violence or building peace there can be no sustainable development. Goal 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

This violence is complex. Although there are fewer armed conflicts in the world now than there were 25 years ago, violence and conflict continue to devastate contexts such as Syria and other areas of the Middle East. In many countries, an end to formal conflict and a return to economic growth didn't end violence. Central America now has higher death rates from violent crime than experienced during civil wars in the region. Others suffer from hidden violence. Violent persecution of marginalised groups for example; or gender based violence, against women and men, that has reached epidemic proportions in some places. Christian Aid partners report from the ground that they are dealing with violence within their communities, or pushing to move on from violent conflict to lasting peace and security for all.

In this context we must question how violence is resolved, and how lasting peace can be formed.

The complexity of actors, motivations, and causes of violence is mirrored by the complexity of the effects and of the possible solutions. What role then, should a development organisation like Christian Aid play in grappling with this complexity? Why should we work on tackling violence and building peace?

Christian Aid designated 'Tackling Violence and Building Peace' as one of our strategic change objectives in Partnership for Change, our global strategic plan. Much has been accomplished by our civil society partners, from programmes supporting resilience in conflict settings such as in Gaza, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to faith-led reconciliation initiatives in Zimbabwe, South Sudan, and Angola, accountability for violence and gross human rights violations in Colombia and Israel & the occupied Palestinian Territory (IOPT), to peace building in Pakistan and Myanmar, among others.

This document now sets out an overarching global strategy for tackling violence and building peace, to bring coherence and clarity to our efforts, and to map out a vision for Christian Aid's continued work in this area. The strategy was developed following a review of our existing work on violence and peace building. It principally draws upon the reflections, priorities, and vision of our country programmes.

This strategy will be co-ordinated by Christian Aid Ireland, which is taking the global lead for Christian Aid internationally on tackling violence and building peace. This work will build on our successful Irish Aid funded work on governance, human rights, and tackling violence and building peace. Our experience in power analysis, our emphasis on governance in all areas of work, and our strength in linking programming work

to policy and advocacy will all underpin our approach to tackling violence and building peace. The legacy of conflict on the island of Ireland itself has produced a network of peace building experts with whom we have built strong relationships, who can guide us in this work. The strategy also draws on a wealth of analysis and peer learning by Christian Aid internationally – most particularly our country programmes and local civil society partners in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America but also from our policy work to date in this area.

This strategy outlines why Christian Aid needs to work on combating violence and building peace and how Christian Aid Ireland will bring this strategic change objective forward. It identifies seven key outcomes we believe are crucial to ensuring lasting peace and security for all, as well as key to developing leadership in this area and in supporting our partners to achieve these aims.

The changing nature of violence

Christian Aid works in over 40 developing countries a majority of which are affected by violence – and so has witnessed the radically changed nature of violence today.² For example, in Sierra Leone, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the formal end of war did not necessarily mean an end to violence. Instead, it marked **a shift from militarised conflict to widespread social conflict**, exacerbated in turn by a proliferation of arms and former belligerents from the conflict, and with continued high levels of violence against women. Peace agreements were achieved, yet disputes over land and resources continue, and the dispossession that is both cause and consequence of violence only took on new forms.

In Latin America, the end of militarised conflict has transitioned into the beginning of **criminalised violence**. Peace agreements formally ended the civil wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. But today, according to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, more people in Central America die violently due to crime than during the civil wars of these three countries. Violence is pervasive across society – the region witnesses some of the highest levels of homicide among children and adolescents, and El Salvador has the highest rate of lethal violence against women and girls in the world, with Honduras and Guatemala also among those with the very highest female homicide rates globally.

There is violence too that remains almost invisible. Violence across Myanmar has been ongoing now for over sixty years, drawing little international attention

most of this time. Extended stalemates bring continued displacement, make public services non-existent, and wear down social structures. Often invisible too is the violence that arises when the structures of society systematically expose certain groups to risk, or prevents their access to services or opportunities. This insidious form of violence has outcomes that are almost identical to those of more direct violence – injury, trauma, disability, and early death.

Like economies and enterprises, violent conflicts are also globalising. Not only are the funding streams for armed groups drawn from across borders, the armed actors on the ground come from different countries and loyalties. The conflicts in Mali, Syria, or Iraq are not just between a central government and local insurgents – they are being fought by multinational fighters and supporters on the various sides. Mass displacement of people caught up in violent conflict further increases the ripple effect, increasing vulnerability promoting instability, and undermining development.

Within these contexts of violence, **illicit and informal economies have consolidated.** These have most often become more accessible and effective than development aid in providing poor communities with the coping mechanisms for survival. In Afghanistan, opium growing not only provides the country with its most important export – it has also created over 400,000 full-time jobs, and financed the conversion of over 265,000 hectares of desert land to agriculture. In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, over 70% of millions of internally-displaced persons choose to live outside UN-administered refugee camps, where they find fewer limits to engaging in informal trade, including smuggling small consumer items over the borders.

The links between natural resources, climate change, and violence are becoming clearer. Christian Aid and others have long been working to enhance communities' resilience to natural disasters, but we are increasingly working in situations where both the threat of climate related disasters, and associated violence and migration are present, and lead to an increase in humanitarian crises.

Why should Christian Aid work on tackling violence and building peace?

Firstly, because we acknowledge that human development cannot be achieved without efforts to tackle violence. Development efforts, built up over years, can be swept away by the onset of armed conflict, or eroded by a creeping tide of violence in society. Feeling safe and secure is as fundamental as food or shelter we cannot plan for the future or experience functioning societies under a constant threat of violence. The Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 acknowledged the fact that in 2011, the number of children leaving primary school in conflict affected countries reached 50%, showing the impact of unstable societies on education, one of development's most fundamental goals.³

Secondly, because we acknowledge that development organisations themselves have a responsibility to tackle violence and contribute towards lasting peace. In the past, tackling violence has been seen as the preserve of specialist peace building organisations, providing staff support in peace negotiations, or enabling back-channel communications between armed combatants. However,

as noted above, violence is complex. Armed conflict can give way to high levels of social violence, local conflicts can be co-opted by international fighters, and illicit economies run with criminal violence can take hold. We believe that a locally-led approach to peace building is essential and yet, violence is so globalised that change must be instigated at a macro level too. We understand that the formation of a lasting, positive peace requires that we address the key drivers of violence, and build a peace process which includes everyone, not just warring parties. This mandate for peace falls clearly within the remit of development organisations. We also acknowledge that we cannot operate in a violent setting without having an effect – for better or worse – on the situation. We therefore need to be politically aware and conflict sensitive, as we try to minimise our negative impact on conflict, and promote local capacities for peace. As we operate more and more in fragile and complex settings, or in countries with high levels of endemic violence, this becomes increasingly important.

Thirdly, because we see the important contribution that Christian Aid can make. The specific strengths and values which Christian Aid brings to our work on tackling violence and building peace are outlined in the following section.

Our strengths and values

- » **Christian Aid is, and always has been, political.** Our humanitarian work is governed by the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality, as outlined in the Core Humanitarian Standard.⁴ But, we are not afraid to engage with the complexities of violence and peace, and to call decision-makers to account on issues of peace and violence. We support local actors to deliver **transformative change and ultimately secure justice** for those whose human rights have been violated.
- » **Our partnership model** with local civil society organisations is at the heart of our approach to tackling violence and building peace. This approach allows us to root our work in the concerns of communities – either by working on violence within communities or linking communities’ concerns to national and international peace building processes. We work in hard-to-reach places and have the **potential to reach the most excluded** in any context. We can help create social cohesion, build local capacity, and support empowerment. We link the local to national and international, to reinforce our work at each level.
- » We are committed to **inclusive programming and gender equality** and the need to analyse intersecting aspects of discrimination, to do no harm, and to better target and adapt programmes to address barriers and risks for diverse groups.

- » We believe that **individual and community resilience** can be enhanced by empowering poor and vulnerable women and men, boys and girls to manage risks in conflict settings and improve their wellbeing, so that they can live with dignity.
- » In many contexts where there is violence and state fragility we have the ability to act as a **relationship broker**. A key role for Christian Aid is rebuilding local level trust within communities of different ethnicities and religions, and between communities and their local government. In some contexts, partners can in turn ensure peace building is a part of national dialogue and focus on rebuilding trust between the national government and citizens. In other contexts where the government is the primary instigator of violence, partners focus more on addressing state accountability and using international accountability mechanisms.
- » We work to **build and protect the space in which civil society operates**, particularly where civil society space is threatened by repressive legislation or other restrictions, and **support the work of human rights defenders**.
- » We understand that **achieving change in this area is complex and long-term** and does not happen in a predictable manner. We commit to supporting partners and recognise that often their role in difficult, violent contexts is to keep hope alive.

- » Our **commitment to advocacy** as a critical element for building the conditions for peace. Our partners use advocacy to ensure that key issues are included in peace initiatives and that marginalised voices are included in decision making. We amplify the voices of our partners in our regional and international advocacy work.
- » Programmes prioritise **understanding power dynamics and the politics of change** in any context. Recognising that the vast majority of violent deaths occur outside of armed conflict, we are committed to tackling all aspects of violence, including social and gender based violence (GBV). In violent and difficult contexts, this enables us to understand and tackle the root causes of violence, in order to build peace, contribute to gender justice, and deliver accountability.
- » The interventions we support are not all faith based – however where they are, **a faith based identity** is an added value and potentially transformative. This identity gives us access into unprecedented areas and creates opportunities for dialogue and influence. In other contexts our partners may not want us to emphasise our faith based identity and we assess this for each context.

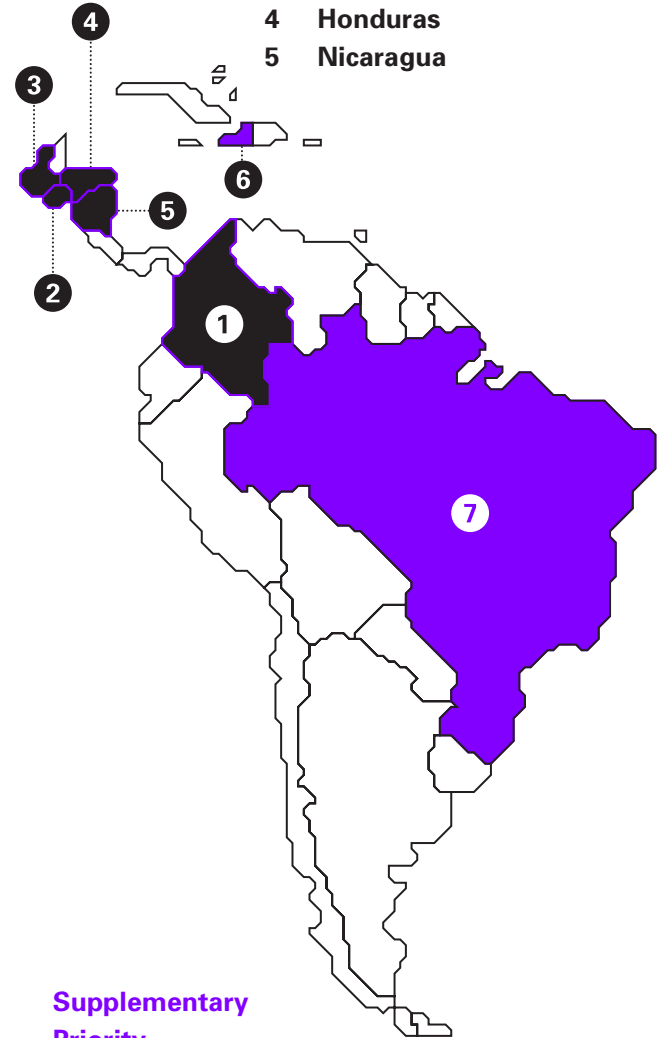
Our geographic focus

Countries have been prioritised based on the need to address issues of violence and peace building in these contexts. In some cases, work on violence and peace building is already a central aspect of that programme. In others, work on violence and peace building needs to be strengthened or developed further. Priorities may change quickly, and part of the strategy will be to maintain some flexibility to respond to changing situations within countries.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Major priority

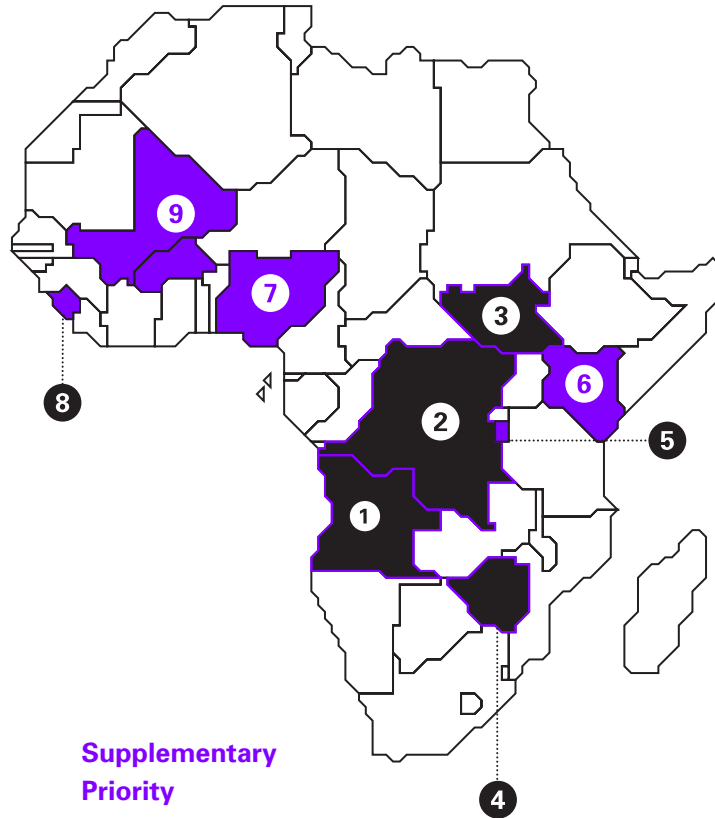
- 1 Colombia
- 2 El Salvador
- 3 Guatemala
- 4 Honduras
- 5 Nicaragua



Africa

Major priority

- 1 Angola
- 2 Democratic Republic of Congo
- 3 South Sudan
- 4 Zimbabwe



Supplementary Priority

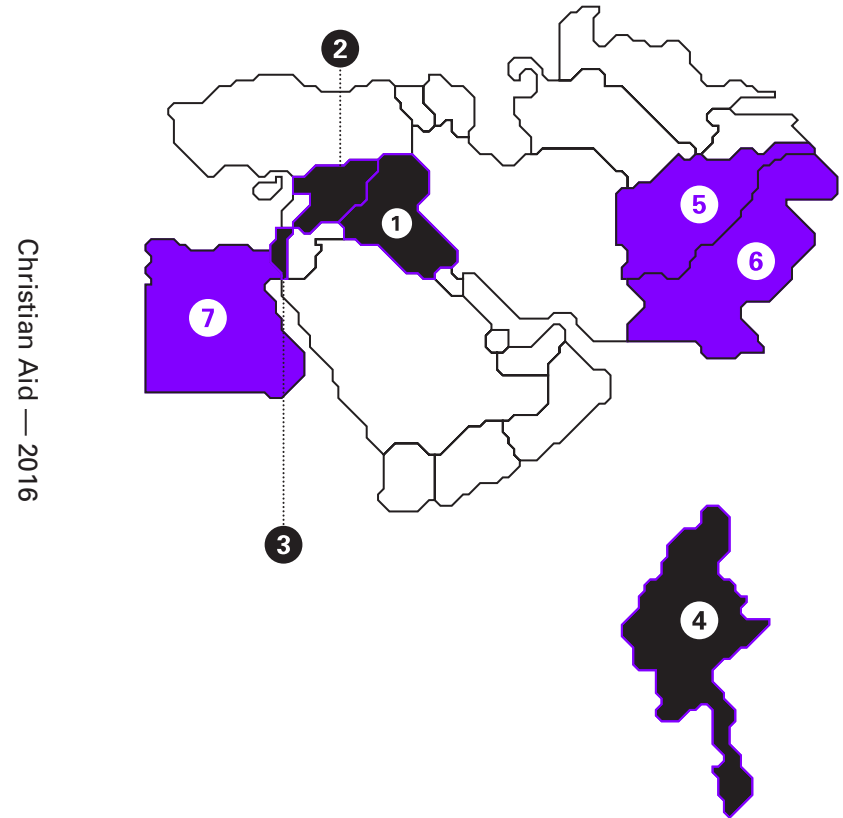
- 5 Burundi
- 6 Kenya
- 7 Nigeria
- 8 Sierra Leone
- 9 the Sahel

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Asia, Middle East

Major priority

- 1 Iraq
- 2 Syria
- 3 Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- 4 Myanmar



Supplementary Priority

- 5 Afghanistan
- 6 Pakistan
- 7 Egypt

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Our track record to date

Our work on tackling violence and building peace thus far has been principally advanced through our large scale **governance and human rights** programming, as well as our **humanitarian** programming through a focus on resilience in conflict settings, gender based violence projects, and conflict sensitive humanitarian responses.

Christian Aid Ireland's five year (2012-2016) governance and human rights programme, supported by Irish Aid, aimed to bring about pro-poor responses and increased stability and security for poor and marginalised people in seven countries affected by high inequality, human rights violations and conflict: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Angola, and IOPT.

In **Angola**, our partner the Council of Christian Churches engages in participative dialogue, mapping priority needs in communities with men, women, and youth. In the absence of any kind of national reconciliation process, or accountability for previous injustices, this assists with community based relationship healing and societal cohesion. They report on their consultations and speak to authorities including the local authorities to make them more accountable, reduce community tensions, and contribute to more peaceful dynamics. In **Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory** partners have pursued international accountability mechanisms, secured protection and wins for communities at risk of displacement, and begun to engage the Israeli public on the issue of transitional justice.

In **Central America**, partners have secured key outcomes in relation to reducing gang violence, influencing public policies on violence, and are working with

local authorities to protect local communities and combat GBV. In **Colombia**, we have witnessed some key successes related to achieving accountability for human rights violations in conflict, and ensuring the views of those most affected by endemic violence are represented in the current peace process.

In **Sierra Leone**, there has been some success with chieftancy reform and reducing community tensions. Tensions over natural resources, inequality, and marginalisation were critical aspects of the country's civil war, and partners seek to address these issues in order to sustain peace and transform power dynamics. In **Zimbabwe**, peace building work with traditional leaders contributed to a reduction in violence in the 2012 election and partners' advocacy influenced the creation of a National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. In our humanitarian division, Christian Aid has been implementing a programme aimed at reducing disaster risks, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID). Since April 2011, we have worked with 333 new communities and 78 local organisations across ten countries to strengthen the capacity of communities and organisations to understand, anticipate, reduce and respond to, disaster and conflict risks.

Christian Aid has taken the lead within the UK International Non-Governmental Organisation sector in exploring how to implement resilience programmes in conflict settings. Research and learning into resilience programmes in DRC, IOPT, and Kenya has informed ongoing work in conflict settings. In October 2014, Christian Aid secured Disaster Emergency Preparedness Programme funding to lead a consortium of organisations for the project 'Linking Preparedness, Resilience, and Response', based on



01



02

Imagery

- 01 Sunduz Alazza (17, left) and Shatha Alhaddad (20, right) live in the occupied Palestinian territory. Their houses are close to an illegal Israeli settlement, where there have been some particularly violent actions. Christian Aid partner B'Tselem works with a number of families to increase their protection against the settlers. Part of this project involves giving young people like Sunduz and Shatha video cameras to capture the violence against them. The footage is used in advocacy, campaigning, and even in the Israeli law courts to bring justice.
-
- 02 Colombia has the second highest number of internally displaced people in the world. Our partner, the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace, has played a crucial role in setting up humanitarian zones in Colombia. Humanitarian zones are demarcated areas offering a safe refuge to people living in areas of conflict. As the Colombian peace process advances, Christian Aid Colombia continues to address the social and political roots of poverty, inequality, and armed conflict.

Our objective and outcomes

a conflict prevention methodology. The **Irish Aid-funded Humanitarian Programme Plan in DRC** pioneered a cash-based approach to income generation, discreetly targeting women who had been victims of sexual violence. The women talked of 'rediscovering their dignity', by coming together, having economic power, and reintegrating into their communities. Evaluators of this programme reported a 'better climate of understanding and cooperation between men and women'. The women who have been involved in the project for a number of years have used their associations to advocate against impunity for GBV. In the Humanitarian Programme Plan project in **Mali** also funded by Irish Aid, conflict resolution emerged as one of the most important community issues, often linked to the exploitation of natural resources and land in particular. The programme is addressing this by setting up local conflict prevention committees in areas where government conflict prevention structures don't exist. In **Iraq**, community fora are working to change attitudes and behaviours that condone or promote GBV.

Country programmes outside these large institutional programmes have also delivered meaningful change in reducing violence and building peace. For example, **Myanmar's** project of community monitoring enabled communities to strengthen dialogue and engage youth in a structured way in their health project, which had a component of community dialogue and peace building. In South Sudan, our historical and emerging partnerships with churches and faith based organisations let us gain privileged access to communities affected by conflict, and enabled our partners to address conflict at local and national levels. In **Pakistan**, we are expanding our work with inter-faith organisations to work more closely with women peace builders.

03 **Image**

Refugee women and children are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), according to the UNHCR. Christian Aid partner Kafa works to achieve gender equality in Lebanon. Its Beqaa Listening and Counselling Centre arranges free legal consultations for victims of gender-based violence.

—
Credit: Christian Aid / Tabitha Ross



03

Our objective and outcomes

Our overall objective is: **We will tackle violence and use our understanding of the key drivers of violence to promote transparent, just, and inclusive peace building that contributes to lasting peace and security for all, especially vulnerable women and men.**

Key outcomes

Lives have changed because of our partners' work, specifically:

- 01 Vulnerable women and men living in difficult and violent contexts are safe, secure, and protected, and are more resilient.
- 02 The risk of gender based violence is reduced, survivors receive adequate support, and women, men, and institutions are working to change the conditions which lead to gender based violence.
- 03 Vulnerable women and men feel empowered to successfully challenge the key drivers of violence, efforts are made to hold perpetrators to account but also to inspire them to rehabilitate, and inclusive peace building initiatives at all levels transform violence into lasting justice and security.

Organisational outcomes

Partners are more effective because of Christian Aid support, specifically:

- 04 A strategic programme framework guides programmes working in, on, and around conflict, to seek transformation and ensure conflict sensitivity (and that our work follows the 'do no harm' guidance), gender and power sensitivity, and to inform gender based violence interventions. (Programmatic support)
- 05 The calls of local communities and marginalised groups for greater safety, humanitarian access, justice, and accountability are amplified and respected, and people living in conditions of violence and conflict can influence decisions through effective participation in key processes and institutions. (Global policy and advocacy work)
- 06 Churches, supporters, and targeted groups deepen their understanding of the key drivers of violence and take action in solidarity and in support of peace building efforts. (Building a movement in support of peace)
- 07 Support from external networks, specialist organisations, donors, and academic institutions strengthens partners' work. (Enhancing our impact and expertise)



04



05

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04 Imagery

No time for war

‘They say that I am a guerrilla, but I have had eight children and 41 grandchildren. Do they think I have time to make war?’

Ligia María Chaverra is one of the most respected and recognised leaders of the Afro-Colombian community in the Curvaradó basin.

With Christian Aid partner, Justicia y Paz (Justice and Peace Commission) she has spoken at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on for them to have their land and to live in peace. She lives in a Humanitarian Zone where weapons are not allowed. She cannot leave the zone unaccompanied because of threats against her.

—
Credit: Christian Aid / Isabel Ortigosa

05 Refugees and migrants on their way to western Europe approach the border into Croatia near the Serbian village of Berkasovo. More than a million refugees fleeing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, make perilous journeys across the Mediterranean hoping to find safety in Europe. Christian Aid is providing critical support to refugees through our ACT Alliance partners.

—
Credit: Paul Jeffrey / ACT Alliance

06 Imagery

Wall at Basara IDP camp and host village
(Muslim) in Sittwe, Rakhine State, Myanmar.

—
Credit: Christian Aid / Rosamond Bennett



06

Our programmatic approach

- » **Our work is first and foremost partner-led and employs a wide range of approaches to achieve our objectives in tackling violence and building peace.**
- » **Wherever we work in violent settings, we must, at a minimum, be conflict sensitive and that includes sensitive to gender and power dynamics. Ultimately we are seeking transformation of violence into lasting and just peace.**
- » **We will incorporate gender and inclusion guidance into our conflict analysis and power mapping. We will move beyond a tokenistic incorporation of women to a more nuanced understanding of how masculinity and femininity play into violence at all levels, and how these intersect with other aspects of identify like ethnicity, wealth, sexuality, etc., and seek to ensure our programmes are inclusive.**
- » **Our work on violence will always be context specific, and we acknowledge that different phases of violence need different approaches.**
- » **We will promote resilience in conflict settings using tools such as our Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment tool, to empower poor people to analyse their problems and suggest their own solutions.**

The first set of outcomes (01 — 03) describes where our programme partners will focus to fulfil the vision of bringing lasting peace, justice, and security to all. The first visual graphic below sets our core programmatic approach to support these outcomes. These will be elaborated on further in our programme framework on tackling violence, building peace.

The second set of outcomes (04 — 07) describe how Christian Aid will support partners on tackling violence, building peace. This is expressed the second visual graphic below.

Figure 01 Tackling Violence Building Peace
Theory of Change

» **Goal: To transform conflicts and reduce violence by ensuring justice, accountability and human rights for all.**

Pathways of change

If we can influence power holders and states to improve protection and justice then people we work with will be protected, safe and can achieve justice for human rights violations.

If those living in violent contexts are supported to survive, thrive and develop then they will be resilient in spite of the risks they face.

If policies, laws, institutions, practices that challenge gender based violence are implemented and if survivors are supported, then the risk of gender based violence will be reduced.

If peacebuilding processes are inclusive at all levels and actively involve the participation of vulnerable people living in poverty then the key drivers of violence and justice are more likely to be addressed.



Ways of working

Governance and human rights and programmes that challenge power holders and strengthen accountability and the state citizen relationship while ensuring the voices of the most marginalised (particularly women) are heard

Resilient livelihoods programming that support people to gain the power to live with dignity, responding to disasters, opportunities and risks they face; **humanitarian work** in conflict settings which provides practical support in a conflict sensitive way.

Programmes that seek to understand and shape how notions of masculinity and femininity can contribute to violence or to peace, and **tackle violence related to gender and identity.**

Peace building and reconciliation that work from local community levels to working with key influential actors such as religious leaders in national peace and reconciliation processes and interventions.



Outcomes

Vulnerable women and men living in difficult and violent contexts are safe, secure, and protected, and are more resilient.

The risk of GBV is reduced, survivors receive adequate support, and women, men, and institutions are working to change the conditions which lead to GBV.

Vulnerable women and men feel empowered to successfully challenge the key drivers of violence, efforts are made to hold perpetrators to account but also to inspire them to rehabilitate, and inclusive peace building initiatives at all levels transform violence into lasting justice and security.

The **organisational outcomes** 04 — 07 (supporting partners with a strategic framework, policy and advocacy, engaged supporters, and a strengthened network) bolster the ways of working towards the outcomes.

Figure 02 Christian Aid's support to Tackling Violence Building Peace



Achieving our outcomes

The following section looks at each of our desired outcomes in turn, and for each we have briefly answered two questions. Firstly, **why** are we prioritising that outcome over others in achieving our overall objective of lasting peace and security for all? And secondly, **how** will we achieve this outcome – what activities do we plan to undertake to fulfil it?

Outcome 01

Vulnerable women and men living in difficult and violent contexts are safe, secure, and protected, and are more resilient.

Why should we work on this?

Violence is endemic in the majority of contexts in which Christian Aid operates, regardless of whether communities are officially ‘at war’ or part of an armed conflict or not. Development efforts will fail unless greater attention is paid to ensuring that people not only have homes and livelihoods, but are secure in them. Conflict can also lead to an environment of regressive gender norms, perpetuating gender inequality.

How will we achieve this outcome?

- » **We will support country programmes to ensure a minimum level of conflict sensitivity across their work. We will help country programmes to analyse and adapt to the changing conflict dynamics they may face.**

- » **We will prioritise support for conflict analysis, initially at country and local level for those already engaged in tackling violence, building peace programming, and later more widely. This will include power and gender analysis, a deeper understanding of vulnerability and how it can change depending on context, and ways to highlight warning signs of potential social and political violence.**
- » **Through our governance work, we will seek to make justice and governance more accessible to the poorest communities who need them most, and enhance the ability of communities and individuals to resist injustice in non-violent ways.**
- » **We will continue our work with human rights defenders, who face continual threats of violence in many of our programme countries in their efforts to secure human rights, peace, and justice.**
- » **In humanitarian settings, we will continue to work through the Christian Aid led consortium on ‘Linking Preparedness, Resilience and Response in Emergency Settings’ to enhance our response to the twin threats of natural disaster and conflict, and use our Resilience Framework to support individuals’ and communities’ resilience.**

Outcome 02

The risk of gender based violence is reduced, survivors receive adequate support, and women, men, and institutions are working to change the conditions which lead to gender based violence.

Why should we work on this?

Violence against women and girls is a global pandemic. The World Health Organisation estimates that violence is a cause of more death and disability for women aged between 15 and 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war combined. It is one of the most harrowing results of gender inequality that is rooted in patriarchal systems that enable men to assert power and control over women. Gender based violence against men and boys is often hidden, and while statistics on GBV against men are harder to find, men and boys in conflict settings are vulnerable to forced recruitment (into gangs or armed forces), detention, and combat. Such an induction into a violent life can make them victims or perpetrators of gender based violence, or both. High levels of gender based violence are also linked with increased levels of HIV and AIDS. Survivors find it more difficult to access necessary support during conflict. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and inter-sex (LGBTI) people can be particularly vulnerable during conflict.

How will we achieve this outcome?

- » **Christian Aid recognises the need to substantially improve our efforts in tackling gender based violence, and will seek to**

incrementally enhance and improve Christian Aid’s response to gender based programming and policy work.

- » **We will leverage the churches’ position to challenge social norms that condone or promote GBV.**
- » **Through our gender work we will employ a gender-inclusive approach (including equality and freedom from violence for LGBTI people). This approach recognises that all gender identities can be sources of both power and vulnerability depending on context, and allows us to explore intersections of gender with other sources of discrimination.**
- » **We will continue to work with partners who have expertise in GBV response, while promoting alternative masculinities and femininities that support gender equality.**
- » **We will work with the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence to develop tools for resilience in dealing with GBV and for guidance on ‘Do No Harm’ in GBV responses.**
- » **Our advocacy work will continue to speak out against GBV and related impunity, while promoting gender equality.**

Outcome 03

Vulnerable women and men feel empowered to successfully challenge the key drivers of violence, efforts are made to hold perpetrators to account but also to inspire them to rehabilitate, and inclusive peace building initiatives at all levels transform violence into lasting justice and security.

Why should we work on this?

We believe that lasting peace can only be achieved where everyone who is affected by violent conflict is involved in its transformation, and where that transformation seeks to uncover and change the very structures and systems which perpetuate violence. We recognise that achieving lasting peace involves changing the narrative in society with regard to violence, and we will seek to find ways through our work to enhance local capacities for peace. Effective peace building cannot be imposed: it must grow in the hearts and minds of both oppressor and oppressed.

How will we achieve this outcome?

- » **We will continue to support local and national civil society peace building initiatives, to transform conflict and ensure that peace building processes are truly inclusive.**
- » **Where appropriate, we will work through faith leaders and faith based organisations to have a positive impact on peace building processes and represent community concerns.**

- » **We will work with partners to ensure that those women and men most affected by violence are supported and empowered to challenge the key drivers of violence, in a safe way.**
- » **We will work with specialist partners to promote alternatives to violence and the rehabilitation of perpetrators and their re-integration into their societies, where appropriate.**
- » **We will support human rights defenders and partners to become resilient, through self-care techniques, solidarity actions, and protection support.**

Outcome 04

A strategic programme framework guides programmes working in, on, and around conflict, to seek transformation and ensure conflict sensitivity (and that our work follows the 'do no harm' guidance), gender and power sensitivity, and to inform gender based violence interventions.

Why should we work on this?

Christian Aid's programming is partner-led and delivered exclusively through partners, driven by their understanding of their local context. However, we better support our partners' work by adding structure, coherence, and useful tools to inform and support their efforts in tackling violence and building peace. We can bring partners together to share their experience of successes they have enjoyed, or pitfalls they wish they had avoided.

How will we achieve this outcome?

- » **Our immediate priority will be to develop a programme framework for tackling violence and building peace, which will include some of the key tools for conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity. Over time, this will develop into a package of interactive training, accompaniment, and mentoring for every programme which has made tackling violence and building peace a priority.**
- » **We will build communities of practice within Christian Aid, facilitating partner-to-partner exchanges on tackling violence and building peace, locally, regionally, and internationally where possible.**
- » **We will undertake a macro-level analysis of violence and conflict, to ensure that we are relevant and can respond to need.**
- » **We will share best practice from academics and external actors, developing partnerships where helpful.**

Outcome 05

The calls of local communities and marginalised groups for greater safety, humanitarian access, justice, and accountability are amplified and respected, and people living in conditions of violence and conflict can influence decisions through effective participation in key processes and institutions. (Global policy and advocacy work)

Why should we work on this?

We believe that a locally-led approach to peace building is essential and yet, violence is so globalised that change must be instigated at a macro level too. In our policy and advocacy work, we will seek to act as a conduit for local peace builders' experience to be applied to wider development solutions. There is a need to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable people to influence decision makers to improve protection and access to humanitarian support; in particular there is a need to ensure that policies around preparedness and resilience are transformed and implemented. Gross violations of international law need to be addressed, international accountability mechanisms that fail to tackle impunity must be strengthened, and access to equal and effective justice ensured. There is a need to ensure that mechanisms for preventing, managing, and transforming conflict deliver justice, and the implementation of SDGs 5 and 16 institutionalise the effective participation of all affected people. Poor people's involvement in informal and illicit economies in fragile and violence affected areas needs to inform development programming and policy decisions. Legislation and policies to eliminate GBV and other forms of identity-based violence must be fully implemented

How will we achieve this outcome?

- » **Our policy and advocacy work will focus on enhancing humanitarian support, greater accountability, ensuring the effective participation of people affected by violence, challenging GBV transforming conflict, and work on the impact of the informal and illicit economies in fragile and violence affected areas.**

- » We will first develop policy positions on key thematic areas, and thereafter, define annual research outputs.
- » We will create a safe space for internal discussion of the dilemmas surrounding our work in violent contexts so that problems can be further elaborated, and lasting solutions found.
- » We will develop a clear advocacy strategy, in the context of Christian Aid’s overall advocacy objectives.

Outcome 06

Churches, supporters, and targeted groups deepen their understanding of the key drivers of violence and take action in solidarity and in support of peace building efforts.

Why should we work on this?

All religions teach peace and in many contexts faith based groups play a crucial role in reducing violence, challenging violent behaviours, and inspiring peace at both local and national levels. Yet religion is often enlisted to legitimise conflict. Our faith base helps us engage with community leaders from other religions in interfaith action to tackle violence together, and protect victims. Our supporters understand the centrality of peace to Christian Aid’s work, and are keen to support our partners’ work in this area.

How will we achieve this outcome?

- » We will develop materials communicating how we understand tackling violence, what the relationship is between alleviation of poverty and the end of violence, gender and violence, why we work on the topics we do, and what value we add as an organisation to global work on violence and conflict. This will better enable our Church and supporters to take action in solidarity.
- » We will facilitate churches and supporters in the UK and Ireland to engage directly with our faith based partners and churches in our country programmes to build a common understanding around ways to build peace, drawing upon experiences of actors who were key to the Northern Ireland peace process where appropriate.
- » We will continue to work through the ACT Alliance and the World Council of Churches to strengthen our links worldwide.
- » We will report regularly to supporters and demonstrate progress on tackling violence and building peace.

Outcome 07

Support from external networks, specialist organisations, donors, and academic institutions strengthens our partners' work.

Why should we work on this?

Our objective to tackle violence and build peace cannot be achieved by Christian Aid alone. Any NGO that fails to look at the work and approach of others in conflict affected contexts might do inadvertent harm to peace building efforts. Therefore, working collaboratively with other groups is essential to creating lasting peace and security. Our work to date on peer learning with external networks, specialist organisations, and academic institutions has greatly strengthened our analysis on complex issues and created space for our partners to critically reflect on new experiences and approaches.

How will we achieve this?

- » **We will establish an external advisory group to guide us in our work on tackling violence, building peace.**
- » **We will continue to partner with specialist organisations and academic institutions to strengthen our partners' work and provide space for learning and critical reflection on approaches and issues around violence and peace building.**
- » **We will work with existing learning groups and coalitions, such as BOND's Conflict Policy Group and the World Council of Churches.**

- » **We will pursue institutional funding for our work, and we will capture a body of evidence around our work in this area to enhance our ability to attract further funding.**
- » **We will identify and mobilise global ambassadors for our work on building peace.**

Ensuring the effectiveness of our work

Measuring the impact of programmes aimed at tackling violence and building peace can be challenging, since the desired outcomes are often difficult to measure. Our conflict analysis and power mapping will be used as a baseline as well as to help us understand trends in violence and conflict. We will use innovative techniques such as outcome harvesting and behaviour change methodologies to determine whether our actions have made the current context better than it otherwise would have been.

We will pursue adaptive or iterative approaches to programming. These are particularly suited to peace building or violence prevention activities, given the need for greater responsiveness to sudden shifts in circumstances. This type of programming allows for greater flexibility and reflectiveness, removing the need for a rigid logical framework, and is thus evaluated in a more fluid manner.



Glossary

Violence

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The majority of violent deaths occur outside of armed conflict. We need to address both violence in the context of armed conflict, and social violence, which is endemic in many of the countries where we work. Direct violence is often underpinned by structural violence (that is, the unequal societal structures which harm people) and cultural violence (the attitudes which normalise or permit direct or structural violence). Understanding and tackling structural and cultural violence is vital to building peace and a fundamental part of Christian Aid's work. We are committed to the eradication of violence in all its forms, as the only means to building a lasting and positive peace.

Gender based violence or GBV

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refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It includes physical, emotional or psychological, and sexual violence, as well as denial of resources or access to services. Violence includes threats of violence and coercion. GBV inflicts harm on women, girls, men, and boys and is a severe violation of several human rights.⁵

Peace

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Peace is much more than the settlement between parties to an armed conflict and the

cessation of fighting. The ideal of peace – the absence of violence in all its forms and the ability of a society to resolve its conflicts in a non-violent manner ensuring access to justice and sustainable development – is therefore sometimes described as positive peace. Peace building, therefore, can take place at various points in time, from before armed conflict has broken out, to decades after a formal peace settlement. It also involves a wide range of actors – not just official parties to a national peace settlement, but community leaders and members as well.

Conflict

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Conflict is a natural part of life, and can even be an important driver of social change. Key to tackling violence and building peace is learning to resolve our conflicts in a non-violent manner. However, conflict is often used as shorthand for armed conflict. Armed conflict is a legal term describing an international armed conflict (war) or non-international armed conflict where international humanitarian law applies. When we talk about post-conflict settings, we are talking about states where a peace settlement has been made, even if high levels of violence remain.

Conflict sensitivity

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Conflict sensitivity is relevant for all actors engaged in fragile and conflict affected contexts and has implications for each stage in the life cycle of an intervention. A conflict sensitive approach minimises the negative

and maximises the positive impacts of any interventions on peace and conflict dynamics. For Christian Aid, conflict sensitivity is bound up with *gender sensitivity and power analysis*, and *inclusive programming*. For gender sensitivity, we seek to consider the differential impacts of our programming on women and men, girls and boys. For power analysis, we look at social structures in order to understand the ways in which different dimensions of power reinforce poverty and marginalisation and how the power dynamics within development work need to be considered.

Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation describes the systemic approach which must be taken to eradicate violence in all its forms, and to truly achieve positive peace. It aims not only to end direct violence and to build positive relationships between conflicting parties, but also to change the structures and systems which underpin these relationships.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a key component of Christian Aid's solutions to conflict and many of the churches with whom we work give this a high priority. Work for reconciliation is often rooted in seeking non-violent solutions, and gives a high value to listening, not only to the 'arguments' in any situation, but to the people within it. Work for reconciliation also needs to attend to the demand for justice for those who have suffered, recognising that

the most complete kind of peace must always be a just peace. Reconciliation can come in different forms, and does not mean forgiving and forgetting past crimes. In fact it is rooted in facing up to the real causes of violence and the experiences, injustices, or grievances that often lie behind violent situations.

Complex emergency

Complex emergencies are defined by the WHO as 'humanitarian crises linked with large-scale violent conflict'. The use of the word 'complex' indicates the need to understand that underlying causes, allegiances, and motivations in conflict are never simple, and that responses must be complex, too. Appropriate responses must be informed by and based on a solid understanding of the particular context, and even where the entry point is humanitarian relief, the risks to protection, both of person and of reputation, must be fully addressed. Ultimately, a complex emergency will never be resolved by humanitarian relief alone, as its complexity stems from a web of underlying issues, all of which must be tackled in order to achieve lasting peace.

Fragility and fragile states

There is no single definition of fragility, although work in fragile states is increasingly prioritised by donors. Fragility has been defined as 'a fundamental failure of the state to perform functions necessary to meet citizens' basic needs and expectations',⁶ and DfID's working definition of a fragile state is one that cannot or

will not deliver core state functions.⁷ While the use of the word ‘fragile’ means we commonly think of weak states, it should be noted that both of these definitions encompass states that do not deliver on core functions not because of lack of capacity but because of lack of will – they are states that may be strong in authority, but weak in legitimacy.

Protection

Protection is often understood differently depending on whether the intervention is seen as a humanitarian intervention or a human rights accountability programme. For humanitarian interventions, it’s often understood in the sense of physical security and meeting basic humanitarian needs. For human rights, it refers more broadly to human rights accountability, and protecting the work of human rights defenders and the communities they support from violence and intimidation. Christian Aid adopts a human rights-based approach to protection, following the ICRC definition: *‘All activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of international law (i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law)’*. This definition emphasises people as rights holders and states and responsible organisations as duty bearers. Christian Aid also recognises that certain sections of society have additional and specific protection needs, such as those persecuted on religious, ethnic, or sexual orientation grounds, as well as women, girls, boys, children, older people, and people with disabilities.

Endnotes

- 1 World Development Report, 2011
- 2 **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Central America – **Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala,** and **Nicaragua** are countries that now have the highest murder and homicide rates in the world. These are also countries that have suffered from civil wars during the 1970s-80s and now witness high levels of social and gender based violence. **Haiti** and the **Dominican Republic** have critical levels of crime and sexual violence, and are also drug trafficking countries. There is growing violence in the Dominican Republic against migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent. **Colombia** – has a long history of political and criminal violence. It also has one of highest number of internally-displaced people in the world. **Brazil** – gang violence and crime are at critical levels, particularly in the Favelas or slums of the country’s major cities. **Africa:** **Mali** is beset by insurgencies, terrorist groups, and organised crime, which are now spilling over into **Burkina Faso**. Northern **Ghana** has a history of insurgencies, and continues to be conflict affected. **Sierra Leone** is a post-conflict country, still recovering from its civil war. **Nigeria** has different conflicts in different parts of its territory, including the oil-producing Delta region. **DR Congo, Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia** and **Angola** could all be grouped as conflict affected. **South Africa** has high levels of crime; **Zimbabwe** has high levels of political violence.

Asia and Middle East: Iraq, I/OPT, Egypt, Lebanon are conflict affected countries. **Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Philippines** are all, or have parts of their territory which are conflict affected.

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3 <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>.

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4 Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, p.8. The four principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence are derived from the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, 1965.

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5 <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/60283/sexual-and-gender-based-violence-sgbv-prevention-and-response>.

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6 Clare Mcloughlin, 2012, Topic Guide on Fragile States, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham, UK.

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7 Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion: a DFID policy paper, DFID, 2005.

Violence and conflict affect almost one fifth of the world's population or 1.5 billion people. The daily fear, uncertainty and suffering borne by people living through violent conflicts is immeasurable and unimaginable.

The fact is most of the world's poorest people live outside any form of protection, and remain vulnerable not just to war and conflict, but to violent criminal organisations, gender-based violence, police abuse, forced labour, and violent theft of land and assets.

Christian Aid has adopted 'Tackling Violence, Building Peace' as a strategic priority to address these trends. This strategy is deeply informed by our work in countries across the globe and reflects the aspirations and vision of our local partners.

'Tackling Violence, Building Peace' is Christian Aid's pledge to work tirelessly and collectively towards a safer future that secures justice and human rights for all.

