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- تنفيذ دقيق لأسباب التفاوض
- مبادئ التفويضات
- توعية المجتمع المدني
- الحصول على الترخيص
- مبادئ وصوله وصلاحه
- القرار والموافقة



# LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES TOOLKIT

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International Organization for Migration  
Address: UNAMI Compound (Diwan 2), International Zone, Baghdad/Iraq  
Email: [iomiraq@iom.int](mailto:iomiraq@iom.int)  
Website: [iraq.iom.int](http://iraq.iom.int)

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## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Defined here as a process through which drivers of conflict afflicting a particular geographical area are addressed through a range of activities involving mediation, negotiation and/or facilitated dialogue, local peace processes have increasingly been turned to as an approach to resolving conflict over the last decade. This shift is due in part to the failures of national peace processes to bring about lasting peace as well as to the changing nature of global conflicts, which have become more complex and multi-layered. One country that has seen local peace processes and agreements emerge as a vital tool for efforts to bring stability and peace is Iraq: 20 such processes have occurred across the country since 2014.<sup>1</sup>

Yet despite the increased use of local peace processes in both the global and Iraqi context, lessons learned from global practices as well as those from the Iraqi experience are still emerging. This toolkit is an attempt to respond to this, in the hopes of furthering global best practices through a better understanding of the Iraqi experience.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, the purpose of this toolkit is twofold: to highlight best practices and lessons learned from the global practice of local peace processes; and to extract

lessons learned and best practices from the Iraqi experience of designing, implementing and monitoring local peace processes and agreements. In doing so, the ultimate aim is to provide donors, practitioners and overall supporters of local peace processes in Iraq and elsewhere with a resource that can be used to design and implement more effective peace processes.

The toolkit is divided into three chapters. **Chapter One** covers the best practices and lessons learned from the global experience with local peace processes. It begins with an outline of the factors that have made local peace processes a key peacebuilding approach before proceeding to highlight some best practices and key lessons learned emerging from the literature to date. **Chapter Two** provides an overview of the Iraqi experience with local peace processes. It includes a listing of the key local peace processes in Iraq, a description of their main characteristics, lessons learned, an assessment of their comparative effectiveness and links to global best practices. **Chapter Three** provides guidelines and recommendations for those wanting to design, implement and support local peace processes in Iraq.

## METHODOLOGY

The toolkit draws on findings from literature reviewed and primary data collected through 16 key informant interviews (KIIs) with international and national practitioners and community and government authorities, and three consultation sessions with Iraqi mediators and practitioners, representatives from international and national organizations supporting and implementing peace processes, and participants of peace processes. Key informant interviews and consultation sessions focused on discussions around the design, relevance, impact and sustainability of local peace processes, with the objective of identifying key best practices and lessons learned. A list of the framing questions is found in the Appendix. Data collection took place in February–March 2022.

Literature reviewed included a wide range of scholarly and practitioner studies, articles and materials. The review also involved programme documentation from some of the organizations implementing local peace processes in Iraq. The full list of documents reviewed can be found in the Annex. Also found in the Annex is the full list of key informant interviewees. Note that interviews were conducted anonymously, to generate more honest and frank responses and insights on the subject. As such, names are not listed; rather, organizational affiliation is mentioned. Those interviewed include current and former staff from international organizations (GiZ, UNDP – Iraq, United States Institute of Peace, UN Mediation Support Unit, Peace Paradigms Organization,

- 1 Some of these processes occurred in the same locations and sought to revise existing agreements. This toolkit focuses on 17 processes as documentation and details of some processes could not be attained for review. A full list of those reviewed is in the Appendix.
- 2 The origins of this toolkit lay in an IOM report from 2020, which offered an initial set of reflections and lessons learned by some practitioners. That report, conducted by Peace Paradigms Organization, an Iraqi organization with extensive expertise and experience on the issue, underlined the need for a more robust study and resource – the toolkit – that could not only consolidate lessons learned and best practices but also situate the Iraqi experience within global practice.

and the International Organization for Migration); key Iraqi subnational authorities from Yathrib, Zummar, Hamdaniyah, Tal Afar, Muhallabiyah and Ayadhiyah; and current and former officials from the National Security Advisory and the National Reconciliation and Follow-up Committee in the Prime Minister's Office

(now called the Committee on Dialogue and Social Peace). The breakdown of each consultation process is below. In addition to these data sources, the findings were informed by the author's own experiences designing, monitoring and implementing local peace processes in Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

Stakeholder Group	# of Attendees	Notes
Iraqi Mediators and Experts	10	Participants were those who have acted as local mediators in various local peace processes. Some are also heads of Iraqi peacebuilding organizations.
International and National Organizations	12	Participating organizations were: International Organization for Migration (IOM); United States Institute of Peace (USIP); GIZ; Un Ponte Per (UPP); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Mercy Corps; Iraqi Center for Negotiation and Conflict Management (IQCM); and Peace Paradigms Organization (PPO).
Participants of Local Peace Processes	16	Those participating were involved in the following peace processes: Yathrib, Qayyarah, Tal Afar Center, Al-Qa'em, Hamdaniya, Ayadhiyah, Anbar, Zummar, Tikrit and Hawija

All sessions were organized and facilitated by IOM's national partner, Peace Paradigms Organization (PPO), and used questions developed by the study's consultant in tandem with PPO. The agenda of each session included four core components: a presentation on the background and objective of the session and toolkit; a preliminary framing discussion whereby examples of local peace processes are given and definitions explained; the main discussion focused on issues of design, relevance, impact and sustainability of local peace processes and agreements; and a closing reflections and lesson learned session.

Key informant interviews were semi-structured and, with the exception of one, occurred remotely. Responses were kept anonymous to encourage interviewees to be more forthcoming with their answers and viewpoints.<sup>4</sup> One validation session with four local government and community leaders was also held to review the main findings of the toolkit.<sup>5</sup> These sessions were supplemented with a validation review from two local mediators.

## LIMITATIONS

Several limitations to the toolkit need to be considered when reviewing its findings. First and as will be explained in Chapter 1, local peace processes as a consolidated peacebuilding approach is still relatively new. Because of this, the subject often raises more questions than there are answers at the moment. Indeed, this study is produced at a time when others – organizations, scholars and practitioners – are undertaking learning efforts in order to address a general field-of-practice knowledge gap on the topic.<sup>6</sup> The hope is that this toolkit furthers these efforts. Second, while the toolkit at times makes evaluative assertions about local peace processes in Iraq, it does not claim to be an evaluation of each individual local peace process covered in its review. Relatedly, findings should not be read as definitive: as with local peace processes as a global practice, the approach in Iraq is still nascent and more questions and debates surround issues of design,

<sup>3</sup> The author has been involved in local peace processes occurring in Yathrib, Hawija, Hamdaniya, Tal Afar Center, Ayadhiya, Al-Qa'em and Basra.

<sup>4</sup> The interviewee list in the Appendix does not list the names of the individuals interviewed, only their professional affiliation.

<sup>5</sup> These included representatives from Qayyarah, Zummar, Mosul and Tal Afar.

<sup>6</sup> One such effort that stands out is that of the Peace Agreements Database at the University of Edinburgh and its corresponding publication series on local peace processes. [www.politicalsettlements.org/pax-series/](http://www.politicalsettlements.org/pax-series/).

monitoring and implementation than there are concrete conclusions. Again, the hope is that this report can move the discussion forward and lead to enhanced learning and better overall practice.

Third, the report looks at local peace processes that attempt to address broader drivers of conflict and tension afflicting a particular territory, usually at the district level, but sometimes also at the provincial tier.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the list of local peace processes reviewed does not include mediation efforts focused on individual or micro-level conflicts within a given territory (such as a social conflict between two families) nor does it cover agreements related to humanitarian access, which the literature does consider to be a type or aim of local peace processes.

Similarly, the October 2020 Sinjar Agreement is not included in the evidence review of the toolkit. While the process fits the definition of a local peace process, it differs from the others reviewed in that it was a top-down, formal process that led to a political agreement between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The agreement was perceived to have low levels of inclusion, both in terms of the parties to the conflict and with regards to community involvement, by civil society groups, community actors and the international community.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, and as presented in chapter two, the processes reviewed are characterized by their bottom-up, informal nature and their relatively high levels of community engagement and inclusion. Essentially, the Sinjar Agreement constitutes an anomaly when compared to the other processes. For these reasons, the Sinjar Agreement is not part of those processes assessed.



Photo 1: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

- <sup>7</sup> As chapter two will show, such processes seek to achieve a framework agreement that finds consensus on how to deal with identified drivers of localized conflict.
- <sup>8</sup> The agreement excluded two key actors to the conflict in Sinjar – the PKK/YPG and the Popular Mobilization Forces – and had low levels of community involvement and engagement, a criticism that came to the forefront after the agreement was announced in October 2020. The agreement was also criticized by community leaders for not responding to other issues causing friction and tension in their district, such as the lack of justice and reparations.

## CHAPTER 1: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM GLOBAL EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES

This chapter begins by covering the factors that have given rise to local peace processes becoming a key tool for peacemakers. It then highlights the main characteristics that define local peace processes. This is followed by an overview of key design considerations and the main lessons learned and best practices highlighted by the literature review.

### 1.1 MAIN FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RISE OF LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES

Over the last 20 years, local peace processes have become an increasingly important approach for peacebuilding organizations and practitioners. The main factors that have contributed to this success include the emergence of complex conflicts; the limitations of national peace processes and agreements; and a paradigm shift within the peacebuilding field. These are reviewed in more detail below.

**The stark emergence of complex, multilayered and multidimensional intra-State conflicts.** Intra-State conflicts have surged since 2010 and have become increasingly more complex and volatile. They have become characterized by multiple warring parties; disparate local and national drivers of conflict; spill-over effects from neighbouring conflicts; violations of international humanitarian laws and norms; regional and international influences and dimensions; and the proliferation of transnational extremist groups and ideas. Recent conflagrations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, South Sudan and Yemen are but only a few examples of conflicts exhibiting all or many of these characteristics. The changing nature of conflict has highlighted the limitations to the top-down, elite-focused and linear peace process model that came to underpin conflict mitigation efforts beginning in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> This model became ill-equipped to respond to the complexities of contemporary conflicts.

**The limitations of national peace processes and agreements.** Peace processes have been further impacted by the fact that national peace agreements are rarely implemented in ways that bring about institutional

changes that sustain peace. Oftentimes peace settlements mention many points and issues but the focus of implementation tends to be on constitutional and/or legislative reforms, the establishment of power-sharing governments and the holding of internationally supervised elections that are meant to broaden political participation and share the political spoils among all groups. Other key aspects to attaining a sustainable peace, such as transitional justice and reconciliation processes, security sector reform initiatives, and identified social and economic reforms, are sidelined and left without a concrete implementation plan or timetable. As such, peacebuilding practitioners and organizations have realized that a shift in approach and the tools to tackle complex, multilayered and multidimensional conflicts are needed if sustained peace is to be achieved.

**A paradigm shift towards more inclusion, hybridity and the local level.** The aforementioned challenges – increasingly complex conflicts and limitations to the linear, national, top-down approach – have pushed practitioners, scholars and organizations concerned with peacebuilding to modify the design and approach of peace processes. In particular, three concepts have come to the forefront of design over the course of the preceding decade: inclusivity, hybridity, or hybrid peace and attention to dynamics at the subnational level.

#### *Inclusivity*

There is ample evidence that exclusionary political, social and economic processes and institutions engender grievances and drive conflict, especially when exclusion is based on ethno-religious identity.<sup>10</sup> Owing to this evidence, the design of peace processes has moved towards the inclusion of previously ignored groups and constituencies, including civil society, women activists, religious actors and local elites. The underlying theory of change to this shift is that if peace processes were more inclusive, then the negotiated agreements produced would be more effective in addressing conflict drivers and community grievances, thereby advancing the pros-

<sup>9</sup> Denney, Lisa and Patrick Barron. 2015. *Beyond the Toolkit: Supporting Peace Processes in Asia*. The Asia Foundation.

<sup>10</sup> See World Bank Group. 2017. *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. World Bank Group; Paffenholz, Thania, and Nick Ross. 2016. "Inclusive Political Settlements: New Insights from Yemen's National Dialogue." *Prism*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 198-210.

pects for sustained peace. Two approaches that have been used to advance inclusivity in peace processes are: national dialogues, whereby civic, political, religious and other actors are seated around the negotiation table together; and track-three mediation and consultation processes, where civil society and community leaders are indirectly engaged with the formal track-one process, dominated by political elites. While the inclusivity principle in general links subnational constituencies and groups to the formal discussions around a national peace settlement, it does not necessarily deal with subnational conflicts that may have their own separate drivers of tension. The latter is a subject of separate focus (see Local Level Dynamics below).

### *Hybridity, or Hybrid Peace*

Hybrid peace refers to a situation in which peace has been achieved through the interaction and mixing of formal and informal institutions, actors and norms, and includes those embedded in both the international system and those indigenous to the country in question. The acceptance of hybrid peace outcomes is the result of the failures brought about by the liberal peacebuilding model that came to dominate the international community's efforts to resolve conflict in the post-Cold War era. This model put an emphasis on the building of formal institutions rooted in the principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and a free market economy. It was perceived that the establishment of such institutions would bring about lasting peace.<sup>11</sup>

Yet in practice, the model came up against a more complex reality, as it did not adequately account for existing formal and informal structures, practices, actors and interests that underpin a country's governance dynamics. In places where the model avoided these dynamics and pushed a rigid definition of liberal peace, the path to sustainable peace experienced setbacks: informal actors, institutions and customary practices competed with and coexisted in parallel to the formal ones, eroding the latter's legitimacy and hindering the

emergence of strong institutions.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, where the liberal peace model was more flexible and gave space for the incorporation of informal customary practices, norms and leaders, post-war governance institutions were seen as more legitimate, paving the way for more sustainable peace.<sup>13</sup> Elements of liberal peace are still seen as crucial in bringing about sustainable peace in post-conflict countries: one study of 34 peace agreements found that peace is sustained for longer when the provisions of liberal peace included in peace agreements are implemented.<sup>14</sup> What has changed, however, is the realization that informal actors, institutions and practices, especially those that do not promote exclusion, have a key role to play in fostering peace and that post-conflict countries need to negotiate their own formula that balances the two approaches accordingly.

### *Local Level Dynamics*

The turn towards greater inclusion and acceptance of hybrid approaches has accompanied the rise in acknowledging the importance of the local level to sustained peace. While the local level was always considered in national level peace processes, such as through track - three dialogue processes, it tended to be subordinate to national issues and drivers. This situation meant that specific local conflicts with independent drivers were not necessarily included in national peace processes and efforts to tackle issues such as land or herder disputes were left to other mechanisms and actors to resolve. The problem with ignoring the local level, however, is the ability of local conflicts to undermine national level peace processes and their agreements: localized violence can create a general destabilizing environment for negotiations, continue to rage even after a national peace agreement is brokered, and be enflamed by local actors excluded from national processes so they get a seat at the negotiation table.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, in countries where national peace processes have stalled, focusing on bottom-up approaches can contribute to

11 Ginty, Roger Mac, Madhav Joshi and SungYong Lee. 2019. "Liberal Peace Implementation and the Durability of Post-War Peace." *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 26, No. 4. 457 – 486.

12 Denney, Lisa and Patrick Barron. 2015. *Beyond the Toolkit: Supporting Peace Processes in Asia*. The Asia Foundation.

13 Positive cases included East Timor, Rwanda, Tanzania and Libya. See: Wallis, Joanne. 2018. "Is There Still a Place for Liberal Peacebuilding?" In *Hybridity on the Ground in Peacebuilding and Development*, by Joanne Wallis, Lia Kent, Miranda Forsyth, Sinclair Dinnen and Srinjoy Bose. ANU Press; Elmagoush, Najla. 2015. *Customary Practice and Restorative Justice in Libya: A Hybrid Approach*. Special Report, United States Institute of Peace.

14 Ginty, Roger Mac, Madhav Joshi and SungYong Lee. 2019. "Liberal Peace Implementation and the Durability of Post-War Peace." *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 26, No. 4. 457 – 486.

15 For examples mentioning Central African Republic, South Sudan, Mali and Democratic Republic of Congo, see Gorur, Aditi, and Madeline and Velturo. 2017. *Local Conflict, Local Peacekeeping*. Stimson Center.



increased stability and generate outcomes for track-one processes to build-off of.<sup>16</sup> Because of localized conflicts' ability to impact national level processes and outcomes, international and national actors have come to pay more attention to the importance of resolving local conflicts.<sup>17</sup>

The attention to inclusivity, hybrid approaches and outcomes and local - level dynamics have all been codified in key international peacebuilding and development frameworks, the most notable of which include various UN Resolutions;<sup>18</sup> the joint World Bank and UN Pathways to Peace study (2018); the UN's Guidebook on Effective Mediation and its reports UN Support to Local Mediation: Challenges and Opportunities and UN Activities in Support of Mediation; and Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## 1.2 DEFINITION AND MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES

Though there is no one established definition, local peace processes are related to the concepts of national peace processes and local conflict mediation and can be defined as *a process through which local drivers of conflict afflicting a particular geographical area are addressed, usually through a range of activities involving mediation, negotiation, and facilitated dialogue*. Examples of localized drivers of conflict that local peace processes can attempt to resolve include, among others, water access rights, land disputes, familial tensions, electoral-related violence, restrictions on movement, and terms for cease-fires and the return of internally displaced persons.

In general, local peace processes involve local actors (that is, community leaders and subnational governing authorities); deal with localized conflict drivers that may or may not be linked to national dynamics; may have national actor involvement and/or linkages to a national peace process; and culminate in written or verbal agreements. Importantly, local peace processes can be initiated by State, national civic, armed or international actors.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.3 KEY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The following are key considerations emerging from the literature that need to be considered prior to engaging in local peace processes:

**Objectives and Timing.** Local peace processes need to be grounded in a clear definition of what they seek to achieve. Are processes looking to manage, prevent, deescalate or resolve a conflict? What drivers of localized conflict is the process looking to address? The objectives should be informed through robust conflict analysis and mapping exercises<sup>20</sup> that can unpack the core drivers of conflict, the positions of the parties in conflict around these issues, and whether a local peace process is an appropriate intervention based on the highlighted dynamics. It may be that the dynamics highlighted point to a need for a local peace process but also that the timing may not be right for it due to other factors in the conflict environment such as political constraints, pressure from certain actors or the risk of a local process undermining national -level negotiations. Understanding these two factors – the objective and timing – can help identify what success may look like, making it easier to establish benchmarks and indicators that measure progress and outcomes.

**Capacity and Space to Engage.** The designers of local peace processes need to consider their own ability to engage the space available to implement and the feasibility of the processes having their intended impact. Here, a couple of key questions need to be assessed. First, would the parties to the conflict welcome third-party mediation and if so, which actor is best positioned to do so? There may be political sensitivities that preclude a particular third party from engaging in local peace processes, such as not being seen as neutral enough. In addition, the conflict mediation space includes the United Nations (UN) missions in addition to many international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), each of which brings their own comparative advantages depending on the context. For example, UN missions may have international and political legitimacy, such as with the UN Mission in Libya, making them best positioned to take the lead

16 Boutellis, Arthur, Delphine Mechoulan, and Marie-Joelle Zahar. 2020. Parallel Tracks or Connected Pieces? UN Peace Operations, Local Mediation, and Peace Processes. International Peace Institute; Richmond, Oliver P. 2013. "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol 38, No. 4, 271-287; United Nations. 2012. UN Guidance on Effective Mediation. United Nations.

17 This need has been enshrined in various UN reports and handbooks, including the 2009 Report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict; UN Support to Local Mediation and UN Guidance on Effective Mediation.

18 These resolutions include UN Security Council Resolution 2282 on Review of the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture; Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; Resolution 2250 on Youth Inclusion; and General Assembly Resolution 70/262 on UN's Peacebuilding Architecture.

19 For more on these characteristics, see Bell, Christine, Laura Wise, Juline Beaujouan, Tim Epple, Robert Forster, and Robert Wilson. 2021. "A globalised practice of local peace agreements," in *Local Peace Processes British Academy and Political Settlements Research Programme*.

20 More on these exercises is covered in other sections of the report.

with regards to local peace processes. In other contexts, the UN mission may not have a mandate or the resources to look at localized conflicts or might be seen as being too close to government actors who are part of the conflict, jeopardizing its ability to play an effective mediating role. Capacity, resources, mandate, legitimacy and reputation are all factors that will shed light on the best entity or entities to lead local peace processes. In all contexts, however, partnerships and coordination are essential between and among third parties engaged in local peace processes.

Second, are the conflict dynamics conducive for local peace processes to have their intended impact? In some cases, asymmetrical power dynamics may exist, meaning the stronger party to the conflict may take advantage of the situation to consolidate and entrench their position in the conflict and impose their terms of 'peace' on the other party. Such was the case in Syria: the local ceasefires negotiated between Syria's Ministry of Reconciliation and armed opposition factions in Aleppo, Homs and Ras al-Ayn came to be seen as capitulation agreements given that they were agreed to after blockades that cut off the civilian population from essential goods and the commitments from the government side were rarely implemented.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, armed groups involved in local peace processes may use them and a lull in the fighting to regroup on the battlefield, rendering local peace processes nothing more than a tool to advance conflict.<sup>22</sup>

**Formal or Informal Processes.** Local peace processes may be formal or informal. Formal local peace processes denote two key variables. One, that they are directly connected or integrated into a track-one peace process or some other national-level forum or process, such as a national dialogue on political reform. Here, local peace processes with a formal mandate are intertwined with the national peace process agenda and have the clear backing of the international and national authorities involved in the track-one process. Examples of this type include the UN's engagement in Libya and Yemen, with formal local peace processes integrated into the overall approach to mediating national conflict. Second, formal also relates to the

mandate and authority attributed to the process itself, irrespective of whether it is formally linked or integrated into a national track. Put differently, if there is a standalone local peace process that has the backing of government and other relevant actors, and comes with enforcement authority on the agreement brokered, then it is said to have a formal mandate due to its ability to directly resolve the conflict.

Informal processes also have two interrelated meanings, both of which are the opposite of their formal counterparts. First, informal processes are those disconnected or independent from national level or track-one processes. This may be because of localized conflict that is not interrelated to national dynamics, thereby precipitating the need to tackle it separately, or due to the fact that standalone local peace processes are in and of themselves a worthwhile endeavor as they can create pockets of peace and generate momentum for national peace accords.<sup>23</sup> Second, the informal also implies a situation in which local peace processes do not have a mandate to resolve the conflict at hand through a binding agreement or pact. In addition, informality may also denote a process that relies on local or customary approaches to resolve conflict, which may contrast with the design of a local peace process rooted in western mediation approaches.<sup>24</sup>

Whether a local peace process exhibits formal or informal characteristics is contingent on the considerations of objective and timing as well as the entity initiating the local peace process and the amount of space that exists for engaging on the issues identified.

**State – Society Dynamics and the Role of State Actors.** Careful consideration needs to be paid to the State-society relationship and the extent to which State actors should be involved in local peace processes. At the level of national peace processes, the State is both a party to the conflict and the main entity responsible for implementing an agreement. At the local level, the State may, but not always, be a party to the conflict, and State actor involvement – either as the facilitator, participant, observer or implementor – may be rejected in contexts where the State is absent or

21 Boutellis, Arthur, Delphine Mechoulan, and Marie-Joelle Zahar. 2020. *Parallel Tracks or Connected Pieces? UN Peace Operations, Local Mediation, and Peace Processes*. International Peace Institute. [www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2012-UN-Peace-Operations-Local-Mediation-and-Peace-Processes.pdf](http://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2012-UN-Peace-Operations-Local-Mediation-and-Peace-Processes.pdf).

22 KII International Practitioner, February 2022.

23 Julia Palmiano Federer, Julia Pickhardt, Philipp Lustenberger, Christian Altpeter, Katrina Abatis. 2019. "Beyond the Tracks? Reflections on Multitrack Approaches to Peace Processes." [www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Beyond-the-Tracks-Reflections-on-Multitrack-Approaches-to-Peace-Processes.pdf](http://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Beyond-the-Tracks-Reflections-on-Multitrack-Approaches-to-Peace-Processes.pdf); KII International Practitioner, February 2022.

24 Boutellis, Arthur, Delphine Mechoulan, and Marie-Joelle Zahar. 2020. *Parallel Tracks or Connected Pieces? UN Peace Operations, Local Mediation, and Peace Processes*. International Peace Institute; United Nations. 2012. *UN Guidance on Effective Mediation*. United Nations.

distrusted by local communities.<sup>25</sup> There is a recognition in the literature that local peace processes need to be shielded from pernicious State actor influence while also attempting to improve the relationship between State actors and communities.

This may mean that State actors are not involved in the negotiation process but instead are engaged in parallel by the third-party mediator so that State actors are aware and supportive of the local peace process and its objectives. An example of this comes from South Sudan, where the UN Mission facilitated a process through which a committee was formed to address conflict between herders and farmers: the negotiation process had the support of but did not include government actors.<sup>26</sup> In some contexts, State actors may be excluded in the negotiation process but included in the monitoring and implementation of an agreement, such as a case from the Central Africa Republic, whereby a subnational State authority was included in a follow-up and implementation committee to a local peace process, thereby helping to reconnect the central government to the area.<sup>27</sup> How the State should be included will ultimately depend on the objectives of the process and the relationship of the State with the identified conflict.

**Stakeholder Inclusion.** Related to the above, those designing local peace processes must determine who to include in the process and its degree of inclusivity. There is consensus in the literature that the more inclusive a peace process – be it national or local – the better positioned the process is to produce viable and sustainable outcomes. This is so because inclusion generates greater buy-in and support for the process and its agreement, while also ensuring all the drivers of conflict are identified and addressed, thereby increasing any agreement’s legitimacy and sustainability. Research has also shown that broader inclusion does not make peace processes less likely to reach an agreement, a concern cited by some mediators.<sup>28</sup>

Yet, who to include is a sensitive issue, as it is linked to existing power dynamics: much like national elites, local elites can influence the participation of actors and groups either directly or indirectly. Even if the process has included a range of key actors, those most powerful may try to delegitimize, manipulate, co-opt or ignore the input of those with less influence and authority, including marginalized groups.<sup>29</sup> Another challenge is traditional customs that emphasize on patriarchal norms and leadership, which inherently restricts the space for youth and women inclusion or, in cases where they are included, their agency and ability to actively and independently participate.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, who to include is a decision largely to be made from the input of the parties to the conflict identified; the role of international and national practitioners is to encourage as much inclusion in the process as possible, in addition to finding ways to broaden inclusion.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 2: Anjam Rasool/IOM Iraq

25 Ibid.

26 United Nations. 2020. UN Support to Local Mediation: Challenges and Opportunities. United Nations, Mediation Support Unit.

27 Ibid.

28 Paffenholz, Thania. 2015. Can Inclusive Peace Processes Work? New Evidence From a Multi-Year Research Project. Policy Brief, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies' Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding.

29 Paffenholz, Thania, Andreas Hirblinger, Dana Landau, Constance Dijkstra. 2017. Preventing Violence through Inclusion: From Building Political Momentum to Sustaining Peace. Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative. Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies; Africa Union. 2013. Managing Peace Processes: Towards more inclusive process. Handbook for Practitioners.

30 Odendaal, Andries. 2010. An Architecture for Building Peace at the Local Level: A Comparative Study of Local Peace Committees. United Nations Development Programme.

31 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation in the OSCE. Reference Guide. OSCE.

## 1.4 GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Though still an incipient field, a review of literature has highlighted several best practices and lessons learned on the design, monitoring and implementation of local peace processes, many of which speak directly to some of the design considerations listed above. They include the following:

**Design Grounded in Research.** The undertaking of a conflict analysis as a first step is crucial to the design of local peace processes.

**Inclusivity.** While there is consensus in the literature that inclusion is generally a boon to processes and outcomes, there has been more debate about the degree of inclusivity, with mediators and practitioners worrying that too much inclusion will warrant a process too unwieldy to effectively attain an agreement. Recent studies and guidance point to a few key lessons and best practices that can help navigate the issue of inclusion.<sup>32</sup>

They include the following:

- *Designers and supporters of processes should take inclusion to mean more than having a direct seat at the dialogue table.*<sup>33</sup> While the inclusion of all actors and segments of society is the ideal, the preceding section highlighted some of the challenges to achieving this degree of inclusion. As such, it is important that the process develops ways that can incorporate the perspective of all groups who might be excluded from a direct seat at the table. Alternatives may include parallel consultations or dialogues with civil society groups, women leaders and youth activists, the findings of which are infused in the formal process with the conflict parties. The process should also try to link those at the table with other segments of society, all the while encouraging the conflict parties to be as inclusive as possible. Doing so will enhance overall legitimacy of the process and its outcome.

- *The degree of inclusion should be based on what is necessary for the process to achieve its objective and will vary depending on the context.*<sup>34</sup> It is necessary that those included have the ability and influence to address the drivers of conflict identified; where this has been the case, peace processes have attained a higher rate of agreement and implementation.<sup>35</sup> This does not mean peace processes should be dominated by a narrow segment of actors who have influence. Rather, it should be applied in conjunction with the other points mentioned here, which ensure that there is the necessary degree of inclusion needed to both attain legitimacy and find solutions to the disputes in question.
- *Though peace processes at the national level have been more impactful and their agreements more sustained when women are included in meaningful ways, this may be difficult to uphold at the local level.* National peace processes where women play a significant role (i.e., are able to respond to the conflict drivers) have led to more sustained agreements.<sup>36</sup> Again, at the local level there might be impediments to including women at the table due to the prevalence of patriarchal customs that regulate women – and youth – to secondary status in decision-making processes. In such cases, the participation of women may trigger a negative backlash by key influential actors. This was the predicament of local mediation efforts in Libya led by the UN mission, where including women was seen as detrimental to the process due to traditional customs rooted in tribal practices that omitted women from decision-making roles.<sup>37</sup> Such cases illustrate the need to balance international norms and principles around inclusivity with local customs and practices and emphasize the importance of inclusivity being driven by what is needed to resolve the conflict in question.

<sup>32</sup> Though most of these best practices are garnered from studies on the national level, many remain relevant to local level processes.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations. 2012. *UN Guidance on Effective Mediation*. United Nations; World Bank Group . 2017. *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. World Bank Group.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Paffenholz, Thania. 2015. *Can Inclusive Peace Processes Work? New Evidence From a Multi-Year Research Project* . Policy Brief , Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies' Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Vericat, Jose S., and Mosadek Hobrara. 2018. *From the Ground Up: UN Support to Local Mediation in Libya* . International Peace Institute.

Even these processes should find ways to include women, such as through parallel consultations, or through research on their perspectives of the conflict dynamics which can then be used to help in the design of the process.<sup>38</sup> Another way of increasing the presence and role of women is if the process directly targets women-specific issues or is initiated by women civil society organizations with the support of international and government actors. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the international community supported women civil society organizations and others in local peace process that focused on women's inheritance issues, which led to an agreement that successfully changed exclusive practices.<sup>39</sup>

- In addition, a country's international commitments can be used to open the space for the inclusion of women. An example: international and national supporters of local peace and mediation processes can point to UNSCR 1325 to get actors to include or be supportive of women in the process, as was the case in the Philippines, where the government's commitment to Women's Peace and Security agenda helped ensure increased women participation in a quasi-governmental tribal council.<sup>40</sup>

**Local peace processes should use local mediators and build off of existing peace infrastructures, including informal mechanisms, to the extent possible.** The global shift towards the local level included the realization that local mediators – individuals who might be perceived as being a part of the conflict due to their ethnic, religious, tribal, family or some other affiliation – have played a crucial role in addressing

conflict in transformative ways.<sup>41</sup> This has challenged conventional assumptions rooted in Western mediation practices that call for third party mediators to be impartial and detached from the conflict dynamics.<sup>42</sup> There is general consensus in the literature that the use of local mediators can bring several benefits and advantages. First, they tend to have a more robust and nuanced understanding of local conflict dynamics, making them less susceptible to rigid political biases and orientations of outsiders.<sup>43</sup> This means local peace processes are more attuned and adapted to the local context when local mediators are included and leading efforts. Second, local mediators understand local customs and the possible entry-points they can provide to overcoming challenges, which is another distinct advantage that comes with their involvement in local peace processes, helping increase the legitimacy of the process in the eyes of the conflict parties.<sup>44</sup> The main tasks of a local mediator revolve around three things: preparation, which refers to helping set the conditions for a local peace process to occur; dialogue, in which the local mediator facilitates the dialogue discussions between the parties in dispute; and mediation, whereby the local mediator tries to resolve the local conflict directly.<sup>45</sup> Local mediators are often individuals but they can also be organizations or an existing peace structure. A prominent example of the latter is that of Local Peace Committees (LPCs), which are usually composed of influential local actors and supported to address local conflicts in their areas.<sup>46</sup>

**Peace agreements should not only address drivers of conflict but also seek to build a foundation for sustainable peace and reconciliation.** Ending conflict is no doubt the main objective of any peace agreement. On this, agree-

38 Agwella, Martin Ochaya Lino. 2021. "Local peace agreements and reduction of violence in South Sudan." Local Peace Processes .

39 Mapatano, Jérémie, and Irene Bahati. 2021. "Local peace processes: case study of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo." Local Peace Processes 42-46.

40 United Nations. 2012. UN Guidance on Effective Mediation. United Nations.

41 Roepstorff, Kristina, and Anna. Bernhard. 2013. "Insider Mediation in Peace Processes: An Untapped Resource?" Security and Peace, Vol 31, No. 3, 163-169; Mason, Simon J A. 2009. Insider Mediators: Exploring their Key Role in Informal Peace Processes. Berghof Foundation for Peace Support.

42 OSCE. Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation in the OSCE. Reference Guide. OSCE.

43 United Nations Development Programme. 2018. Engaging with Insider Mediators: Sustaining Peace in an Age of Turbulence. UNDP.

44 Boutellis, Arthur, Delphine Mechoulan, and Marie-Joelle Zahar. 2020. Parallel Tracks or Connected Pieces? UN Peace Operations, Local Mediation, and Peace Processes. International Peace Institute; Mason, Simon J A. 2009. Insider Mediators: Exploring their Key Role in Informal Peace Processes. Berghof Foundation for Peace Support.; United Nations Development Programme. Supporting Insider Mediation: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence. Guidance Note Summary. UNDP.

45 Ibid.

46 Odendaal, Andries. 2010. An Architecture for Building Peace at the Local Level: A Comparative Study of Local Peace Committees. United Nations Development Programme.

ments need to ensure that they are addressing the drivers of conflict directly, or in contexts where that is not possible, provide agreement on how that can be done.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, peace agreements should also include provisions that provide for conflict transformation. This is often framed as the transition from negative peace – the cessation of violence – to positive peace, which denotes more sustainable outcomes. Agreements should also use easy-to-understand language, be in line with international human rights standards and norms, state the implementation mechanism of the agreement and outline a mechanism or process to deal with disputes arising in the implementation phase.<sup>48</sup> On language, one study has highlighted that the use of vague language can be especially problematic to peace agreements that look at broader issues: this combination might make it easier to attain support but in the long-run such agreements tend to encounter implementation problems.<sup>49</sup>

**An agreement’s implementation process requires flexibility and external support and needs a wider community engagement strategy.** Because of the stark emergence of complex, multidimensional conflicts, there is increasing recognition in the literature that peace accord implementation requires flexibility and agreements should be considered to be a plan to achieving sustainable peace rather than a contract with stringent obligations.<sup>50</sup> Nor is implementation of accords viewed to be linear: the implementation process is filled with violations, periods of stagnation and other setbacks.<sup>51</sup> Related to this, local peace agree-

ments often require external support if they are to be implemented.<sup>52</sup> This is due to capacity constraints among the parties to the conflict as well as the lack of trust among the parties to fulfill their commitments. One shortcoming emerging from the literature is that local agreements are not always well known by the broader community, meaning that more needs to be done to increase the public’s awareness about the process and its outcomes.<sup>53</sup>

**An agreement’s implementation mechanisms can have several functions depending on the context.** On implementation mechanisms, the literature is lacking with specific cases reflecting local peace processes – the focus is mainly on national agreement implementation. However, there are best practices that can be applied to the local level with regards to a mechanism’s composition, functions and roles. On composition, mechanisms can be comprised of civil society and/or international third parties; the parties to the conflict; or include a combination of both groups. One benefit of having third-party involvement is that it can overcome any trust issues, though it might also dilute the sense of local ownership.<sup>54</sup>

In terms of roles, mechanisms can play an implementing, monitoring, verification and/or dispute resolution function. Regarding implementation, the literature shows cases where local peace processes have established committees or designated councils to lead in implementation efforts, though this often still requires the

47 United Nations. 2012. UN Guidance on Effective Mediation. United Nations.

48 United Nations Development Programme. 2020. Implementing Peace Agreements: From inclusive processes to inclusive outcomes? Issue Brief, UNDP; Molloy, Sean and Christine Bell. 2019. How Peace Agreements Provide for Implementation. Political Settlements Research Programme, Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh; O’Driscoll, Dylan. 2017. Lessons From Peace Processes. Help Desk Report. UK Department for International Development.

49 O’Driscoll, Dylan. 2017. Lessons From Peace Processes. Help Desk Report. UK Department for International Development.

50 United Nations Development Programme. 2020. Implementing Peace Agreements: From inclusive processes to inclusive outcomes? Issue Brief, UNDP; Lyons, Terrence. 2018. “Peace Implementation and Quality Peace,” in Understanding Quality Peace: Peacebuilding after Civil War, eds. Madhav Joshi and Peter Wallensteen. London and New York: Routledge. 29–44.

51 Molloy, Sean. 2018. Assessing and Influencing Progress in Peace Processes Workshop Report. Political Settlements Research Programme, Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh.

52 Agwella, Martin Ochaya Lino. 2021. “Local peace agreements and reduction of violence in South Sudan.” Local Peace Processes. 15 – 21.

53 See full report Local Peace Process at [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3415/Conflict-Stability-Local-Peace-Processes\\_MM5JYsf.pdf](http://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3415/Conflict-Stability-Local-Peace-Processes_MM5JYsf.pdf).

54 Molloy, Sean and Christine Bell. 2019. How Peace Agreements Provide for Implementation. Political Settlements Research Programme, Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh; United Nations Development Programme. 2020. Implementing Peace Agreements: From inclusive processes to inclusive outcomes? Issue Brief, UNDP; Ross, Nick. 2017. Civil Society’s Role in Monitoring and Verifying Peace Agreements: Seven Lessons from International Experiences. Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative. Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

support of external actors.<sup>55</sup> Monitoring refers to the mechanism gathering information on the agreement's implementation in order to gauge progress and identify possible violations.<sup>56</sup> This can be done through establishing a third-party monitoring team comprised of experts or civil society groups or one that includes the parties to the conflict. Verification differs from monitoring in that the mechanism is attempting to confirm a reported violation. On dispute resolution, the mechanism can be mandated to settle any dispute related to implementation, either through a verdict or judgment or based on further mediation to resolve the issue in question.<sup>57</sup>

Local agreements and international norms do not always align. A recent study of local peace agreements found a disconnect between local peace agreements and international human rights provisions and norms.<sup>58</sup> Unlike their national level counterparts, local peace agreements are less likely to contain references to such rights; instead, there is a tendency to construct their legitimacy on customary norms and values, which are more likely to be recognized and accepted by local communities. This finding shows that local agreements are less predisposed to the international rights conventions and norms in absolute terms.



Figure 3: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

55 Molloy, Sean and Christine Bell. 2019. How Peace Agreements Provide for Implementation. Political Settlements Research Programme, Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh.

56 Ibid; United Nations Development Programme. 2020. Implementing Peace Agreements: From inclusive processes to inclusive outcomes? Issue Brief, UNDP.

57 Ibid.

58 Pospisil, Jan. 2022. "Dissolving conflict. Local peace agreements and armed conflict transitions." Peacebuilding 1-16.

## CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF THE IRAQI EXPERIENCE

### WITH LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES

This chapter proceeds with a brief review of the recent history of local peace processes in Iraq. It then covers the main characteristics of these processes before offering an assessment of their comparative effectiveness. The chapter then covers the main lessons learned offered by the Iraqi experience with local peace processes and ends with a discussion about their links to global good practice.

#### 2.1 RECENT HISTORY

Local peace processes in Iraq emerged as a key peace-building tool for international and national actors in 2014 due to conflict that began with the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). The conflict left millions displaced, created new and exacerbated already-existing social tensions, and widened an already-wide governance gap between communities and government actors and institutions, all in specific geographical areas. As areas started to be retaken from ISIL, the conflict's impact on social relations in these areas began to appear, necessitating a targeted, localized response to address tensions. This in turn spurred national institutions to pay closer attention to what was occurring at the local level, something that was already being monitored by some international and national organizations and NGOs.<sup>59</sup> One such institution was the National Reconciliation and Follow-up Committee (NRC)<sup>60</sup>, which operated from the Prime Minister's office. Originally given a narrow mandate, the NRC's scope and mission were expanded to focus on reconciliation at the local level. In doing so, it became a key government interlocutor for organizations seeking to conduct local peace processes, with partnerships formed that brought the institution into local processes as required.

The study identified several processes implemented since 2014, targeting the level of governorate, district, subdistrict or town. These include Tikrit, Yathrib, Haw-

ija, Anbar governorates, al-Qa'em, Hit, Tal Afar Center, Ayadhiya, Zummar, Hamdaniya, Qayyarah, Shirgat, Tal Kief, Habbaniya, Rawa, Tuz Kharmato and Basra. A full list detailing the scope of these processes is included in the Appendix.

The majority of these processes aimed to address localized drivers of conflict in areas retaken from ISIL, with the intent of alleviating intra- and intercommunity conflict; overcoming social barriers to return for internally displaced persons (IDPs); improving the linkages between community leaders and government authorities; and laying the foundation for enhanced stabilization and recovery efforts of their areas. Others dealt with issues not necessarily directly linked to the ISIL period.<sup>61</sup>

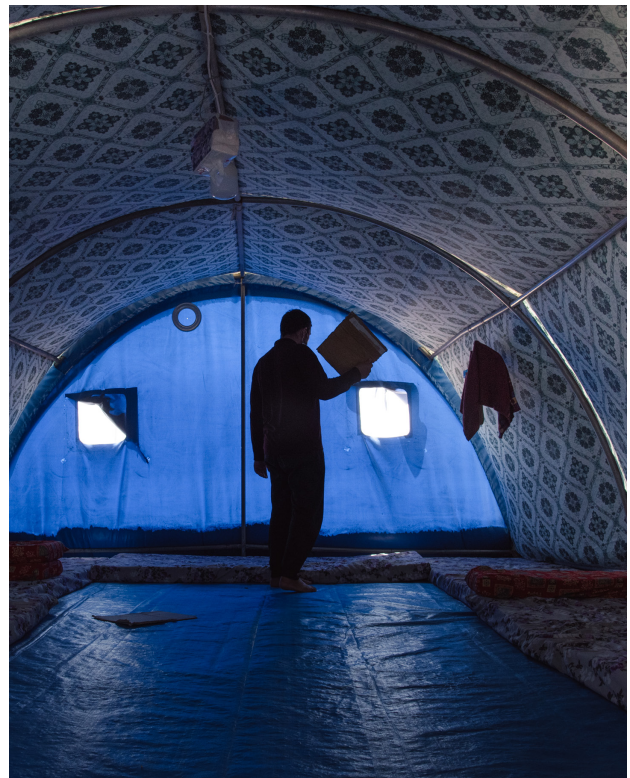


Figure 4: Yad Abulqadir/IOM Iraq

<sup>59</sup> The first process took place in 2014-2015 in Tikrit, supported by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and Sanad for Peacebuilding, an Iraqi NGO. Around this time, UNDP's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (later renamed the Funding Facility for Stabilization), the initial mechanism to channel international funds to help stabilize liberated areas, included Social Cohesion and Reconciliation as one of the four windows of assistance. Funds under this window were utilized to support local peace processes for UNDP grantees. Other organizations, such as IOM and GIZ, also began to support local peace processes, shift that was aided by the establishment of formal and informal coordination mechanisms and working groups around social cohesion and reconciliation.

<sup>60</sup> The institution has since gone through several name and staffing changes. It is now called the Committee on Dialogue and Social Peace (CDSP). More on the NRC and its connection to local peace process is explored in Section 2.4.

<sup>61</sup> These areas include Hamdaniya, Tal Kief, and Basra.



## 2.2 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES IN IRAQ

The majority were sponsored by the international community and directly initiated by national organizations and were the result of either government or community requests to intervene. The Anbar Covenant was the only local peace process directly led by a government actor, the Governor of Anbar.<sup>62</sup> The remaining were directly initiated by international organizations and partner national NGOs but they were triggered by requests from either government or community leaders to intervene, often sparking a conflict assessment phase to understand the issues, parties to the conflict and dynamics impacting the area in question.

All are informal but involved national and subnational authorities to varying degrees. All can be classified as informal in that the processes lacked an official mandate. However, some national and subnational authorities were involved in or directly linked to all processes, giving them more of a hybrid status. A key national government actor involved in most processes was the Committee on Dialogue and Social Peace, and its predecessor institution, the National Reconciliation Committee. Other government actors included in some processes include: the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Ministry of Interior, National Security Advisory, Sunni Endowment, Governors, members of the Council of Representatives, local security officials and district commissioners (qa'em makam).

The majority of processes began with a conflict assessment and adapted an approach reliant on dialogue and the use local mediators. Facilitated intra- and intergroup dialogue was a key feature of local peace processes reviewed. This phase was usually preceded by a research phase (that is., conflict assessment or analysis, stakeholder mapping, desk research etc.) that highlights

the proximate and structural drivers of conflict and the key parties to the conflict and their interests.

Some processes also incorporated shuttle mediation-like activities in between the dialogue sessions, and confidence building measures taken at the onset of the dialogue sessions that were meant to lay the foundation for a fruitful dialogue process. In addition, all the processes used individual local mediators to some extent: they provided analysis on the conflict dynamics of the locations targeted, facilitated the dialogue sessions, engaged in shuttle-like mediation activities where relevant, and/or assisted in the monitoring of the agreements.

One difference in the use of local mediators does stand out, however. As previously covered, local mediators are often individuals but they can also be peace structures, such as local peace committees. Of the processes reviewed, those supported by UNDP were led by local peace committees<sup>63</sup> comprised of community leaders and which were given a mandate to work on resolving conflict in their areas via an official linkage to the Committee on Dialogue and Social Peace (CDSP). UNDP provided capacity support to the LPCs in the form of training workshops on mediation approaches, designing community-based initiatives, and sustainable reintegration, and helped facilitate LPC engagements and activities.<sup>64</sup> Apart from these cases, the process in Tal Keif had a similar approach whereby a District Working Group comprised of key community stakeholders was directly supported to lead efforts.

Most processes sought a written agreement, and, where reached either formed or used an existing committee to help with the agreement's implementation. Most processes reviewed sought to achieve a written agreement. Once reached, these processes either led to the establishment of a committee or engaged an existing one to work on

62 Yathrib presents an unusual case. The process was initially supported by UNDP and USIP. The former supported the research phase of the process; the latter the dialogue and mediation phase. Sanad for Peacebuilding was the main implementing partner in both phases. Towards the end of process, a new governor was appointed who was not supportive of third-party mediation efforts in Yathrib. After some discussions, USIP handed over the process to the governor with the understanding that he would take the process towards the finalization of the agreement, a draft of which had been reached at the time of his appointment. While USIP, Sanad and UNDP were not included in the final governor-led phase, they continued to monitor the process and maintained contacts with the tribal leaders.

63 Local Peace Committees were formed in 2016-2017 by UNDP and the National Reconciliation Committee in the Prime Minister's Office (NRC). Several international and national organizations committed to not establishing new committees in areas where LPCs were formed and to use the committees in the local peace processes should they be present in the locations where agreements were reached. The LPCs were created to act as a local mediation body that could be employed to tackle local conflicts in their communities and were initially comprised of key community leaders – tribal, civic, religious – and local government authorities in select locations in Iraq. They were also given a formal linkage to the NRC, making the LPCs an extension of the national institution. However, in 2018, many of the LPCs were dissolved and were later reconstituted as Community Dialogue Committees with membership largely comprised of civic actors.

64 In non-UNDP supported processes, local peace committees were involved either by having some members in the dialogue process or through the implementation phase of the process.

the pact's implementation. Those formed were comprised of influential stakeholders involved in the process. In cases where a local peace committee existed, processes used the LPCs in the monitoring and implementation phases, with training provided to some LPCs on the issues covered by the agreements. For example, the Tal Afar Local Peace Committee was trained on compensation issues, in terms of both the Iraqi mechanism and law, and comparative cases in order for committee members to have a foundation on which to base the implementation work. With regards to implementation, most processes developed an implementation plan – in the form of an action plan, community mobilization strategy, community plan or an advocacy plan – to help the committees understand what steps can be taken to implement the points of the agreement.

Most local peace processes were initiated to address issues directly related to the conflict with ISIL, including social barriers preventing the return of IDPs. Many also aimed to address broader community grievances related to governance and economic development. These and other key takeaways on their focus include:

- *The processes focused on drivers of conflict and tensions specific to their geographical locations, with the agreements reached reflecting these issues.*<sup>65</sup> The majority of the processes reviewed dealt with immediate drivers of tension and conflict caused by the ISIL conflict, including the issue of collective punishment and liability towards the Sunni community; security concerns involving arrangements and actors in the post-ISIL period; demands for transitional justice, including criminal prosecution and compensation; and the need to counter extremist and sectarian rhetoric. Most processes also dealt with the return and reintegration of IDPs, with a specific focus for those with perceived ISIL affiliation. Some also included aspects of *transitional and restorative justice*, such as a consensus on how to handle compensation demands rooted in tribal practice. Provisions that reject violent extremist narratives and call on tribal, religious and government authorities to address this issue were also a focus of many agreements. A central aim in addressing these issues was the repairing of fractured intra- and intercommunity relationships and by extension the promotion of peaceful coexistence and community reconciliation.
- *Agreements also tried to mitigate the impact of exclusionary tribal customary practices that were identified as inflaming tensions in the post-ISIL environment.* The

conflict with ISIL fragmented already-fractured tribal dynamics and led to certain tribal customary practices – usually perceived by tribal authorities as helping pacify some conflicts – aggravating tensions and divisions. In particular, several main practices stood out as spurring tensions in the immediate post-ISIL period: *diya*, or the payment of monetary compensation by the family or tribe found guilty of a violent crime; *tabriya*, or the act of disavowing a family member who committed a serious crime; *thar*, or revenge acts of tribal violence; the act of shielding or protecting tribal members involved in disputes; and the tribal principle of collective responsibility and liability. Several processes and agreements dealt with these issues. This is explored in more detail in Section 2.3 Comparative Effectiveness of Processes.

- *Many processes also focused on bridging the gap between communities and government actors and institutions on the local, provincial and/or national level.*<sup>66</sup> This was done in two ways: including government actors in the processes – often around the dialogue table – to help in the identification of solutions to the conflict drivers and issue raised; and, where agreements were produced, linking the implementation or monitoring committee formed to key national and provincial actors and institutions to follow-up on points in the agreements that need government attention.
- *Agreements contained general language reflecting points of consensus.* The agreements reached contained language that showed consensus among the conflict parties on how to resolve certain issues – as opposed to specific solutions that would be outside their purview and authority. This is so because processes are informal, which precludes them from issuing a legally binding agreement that may contain more specific commitments. Agreements are often accompanied by an action plan that outlines key steps and actions that work towards agreement's implementation.
- *In some locations, the initial agreement acted as a framework that provided an opportunity to settle other disputes.* For example, in Zummar, the process culminated in a framework agreement in 2020 that covered issues related to the return of IDPs and countering violent extremism. The agreement also committed the signatories to work together to peacefully resolve more specific drivers of tension in the subdistrict. This in turn led to the initiation specific mediation processes that tackled long-standing land conflicts in the area.

<sup>65</sup> See table in the Appendix, which outlines the scope of the processes reviewed.

<sup>66</sup> In the case of Zummar, this included government actors on the KRG side.

Most processes were dominated by tribal actors, limiting the inclusion of other segments of society. Many of the areas where processes occurred are those in which tribal dynamic and conflicts are salient. This meant that these processes were either tribal-leader dominated or ones in which tribal leaders played a significant role. The former includes Anbar, western Anbar, Basra, Ayadhiya, Hawija, Yathrib, Tikrit; the latter, Tal Afar Center, Zummar. These processes were inclusive in the sense that they included all influential tribal leaders party to the conflict in addition to the identified government and security actors needed to address the issues focused on. That is, they included the needed actors to resolve or find consensus on resolving the issues on the table.

Beyond this, community inclusion varied in all the processes but most found other ways to engage vulnerable and marginalized groups who were not directly seated at the dialogue table. These are explored in Section 2.4 Lessons Learned.



Figure 5: Anjam Rasool/IOM Iraq

## 2.3. COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROCESSES AND AGREEMENTS

The toolkit has identified several general areas local peace processes have been effective at. These are listed below.

*Responding to community grievances and social tensions in the immediate conflict environment hampering both social cohesion and the return process of IDPs.* The processes have proven adept at responding to community grievances and proximate conflict drivers impacting their areas in the immediate post-ISIL period. This is partly due to the fact that processes were grounded in research of the conflict dynamics, which identified proximate and structural conflict drivers, including those impeding the IDPs' return process in many areas. By addressing these issues, processes and agreements have helped to mitigate social tensions and provide a more stable foundation for the safe and voluntary return of IDPs. Indeed, local peace processes and agreements came to be seen as a key part of the overall framework for the return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation, both in the view of the international community and key government actors.<sup>67</sup> Some processes expanded their focus and went beyond immediate drivers. For example, in Zummar, the focus included addressing long-standing land conflicts dating back to the Baathist regime's pernicious strategy of demographic change that targeted non-Arab areas, showing that bottom-up efforts can also deal with more sensitive and entrenched factors linked to the national level.

*Attaining community legitimacy.* The processes were effective at attaining community legitimacy and credibility, in part because they were triggered by community requests or came after confidence-building measures that laid the foundation for the process to occur. That these processes and agreements were not imposed on communities and afforded them the space to be part of the solutions to problems also added to increased legitimacy, especially as they countered the dynamics of other areas where a dominant political or government actor was able to impose solutions to the issues in the post-ISIL period on communities.<sup>68</sup>

*Convening and establishing relationships between parties in dispute and between community leaders and government actors and institutions.* The ability of processes to convene community leaders, tribal authorities, women, youth, local, pro-

67 Parry, Jacqueline, and Olga Aymerich. 2022. Local Peace Agreements and the Return of IDPs with Perceived ISIL Affiliation in Iraq. Policy Research Working Paper 9916, World Bank Group; United Nations. 2020. Joint Approach: Community Based Reconciliation and Reintegration of Children, Young People and Adults formerly associated with ISIL/Da'esh; United Nations. 2021. Resolving Internal Displacement in Iraq: Interagency Durable Solutions Strategic and Operational Framework.

68 Diyala governorate is usually raised as an example where a dominant political actor has imposed solutions around return processes due to the political space in the governorate being controlled by one political entity.

vincial and national government representatives in a process towards common objectives is seen as a key success inherent in the modality of local peace processes. This is because in the case of the Basra process, the convening factor brought together tribal authorities and security and government institutions to find solutions to attacks against public sector and health workers. In doing so, tribal leaders in conflict between themselves were engaged, prompting these authorities to directly speak to one another on the side lines of the process, and ultimately, finding a resolution to their conflict.<sup>69</sup> In the case of Qayyarah, the process brought together federal authorities and community leaders, resulting in federal representatives visiting the area, something that had not happened before.<sup>70</sup> This also resulted in the National Security Advisory establishing a committee to follow-up on the outcomes of the process related to the return and reintegration of those families with perceived affiliation, connecting the community directly to an influential national institution.<sup>71</sup>

*Diluting the impact of exclusionary tribal practices and brining tribal processes closer to the State.* As demonstrated in the previous section, several processes aimed to mitigate the harmful impact of certain tribal customary dispute practices and, in doing so, brought them in line with or in support of State security and justice processes. Overall, local peace processes proved effective at reaching these objectives, as many brokered agreements contained commitments from tribal leaders to drop or amend certain practices. For instance, tribal authorities agreed to abide by decisions of the security vetting process, meaning they would not oppose the return of IDPs cleared to return even in the presence of some community opposition to certain individuals or families. Relatedly, tribal authorities agreed not to shield the members of their tribe should they be wanted by security actors, a provision that helps prevent future tensions and conflict between tribes and State actors.

One principle proved harder than others to amend, however: *tabriya*, or the process of disavowing a relative, usually because of a severe criminal act. The act results in the disavowed relative being banished from the tribe. In the post-ISIL period, tribal authorities, families directly victimized by ISIL and some local security actors have called for this practice to be part of the return and reintegration process for families with perceived ISIL affiliation. As an informal mechanism, the process involves a disavowal in front of the main tribal leaders and relevant community members and does not carry with it any formal legal ramifications. However, in some areas tribal leaders were stating that *tabriya* should take the form of legal practice whereby an

individual disavows the relative in front of a formal court. This version of *tabriya* can carry legal consequences, such as the loss of inheritance rights and the inability to attain legal documentation. The practice has also raised the profile of women who have disavowed their husbands, with some receiving threats from the husband's relatives. As such, *tabriya* is more controversial than its informal form. While some processes were able to drop the demand for *tabriya* overall, others sought other ways of doing so, such as by reverting the process back to its informal State. In other words, the agreement would no longer contain the formal version that carries legal consequences.

The stipulation to keep the provision by tribal leaders highlights the difficulty of producing local agreements in post-conflict situations that are fully in tune with international human rights norms and principles. Religious and tribal customs, which hold weight and legitimacy among communities, will sometimes be at odds with international human rights-focused agreements, resulting in pacts that are an amalgamation of both sets of principles. Indeed, as the previous section highlights, local peace agreements have generally struggled to incorporate norms rooted in the liberal peace model.



Figure 6: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

<sup>69</sup> KII Practitioner, March 2022.

<sup>70</sup> KII Practitioner, March 2022.

<sup>71</sup> KII Government Authority, March 2022.

## 2.4 MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

This section is based on the findings of key informant interviews and the consultation sessions with international and national organizations, national experts, and the participants of some of the local peace processes. The below findings attempt to highlight the main trends emerging in the Iraqi experience and the issues and debates that accompany them. Note that whenever possible, specific examples are given; however, in some cases some details are withheld for confidentiality considerations.

### Design

Several factors should be considered when deciding whether international and national organizations should implement local peace processes. Such factors include the resources available, the mandate of the organization, the objective of the process and the feasibility of achieving it, and the extent to which communities in the conflict area are motivated and ready to engage in such a process. Many of these are interrelated. For example, a decision to proceed with a local peace process will need to ensure that the resources available are sufficient towards meeting the objective of the process. Similarly, what the process can achieve is contingent on the extent to which communities and the conflict parties are ready to engage and address the issues identified. If readiness and willingness to engage is not present, then processes are bound to be limited in their impact. Two examples appear here. In Hamdaniya, certain religious actors from one community were not in favour of the process, despite other segments backing and supporting it, a fact that casted doubt over the process' potential outcomes. In Sinjar, some organizations exploring whether and how to intervene to mitigate tensions between the Yazidi and Sunni Arab community were faced with the fact that some key segments of each group were not ready to engage in a dialogue around reconciliation issues, thereby necessitating the need to modify expectations about what success could look like.

**A research assessment phase is crucial for the design of the process.** There is broad consensus among international and national organizations supporting local peace processes as well as Iraqi facilitators and mediators involved in them that the most crucial step in the design process involves research to determine the proximate and structural drivers of conflict and the key stakeholders that are linked to the conflict dynamics. Such research can be primary research – via rapid conflict assessments, more robust conflict analyses, and/or stakeholder mappings – or in cases where the conflict necessitates immediate intervention, thereby limiting the time available to conduct primary approaches, secondary research in the form of a desk review of existing studies.

There was an emphasis that primary research should engage and use local mediators who are familiar with the areas, given their understanding of the conflict dynamics and cultural sensitivities, and their relationship with community actors, and take a participatory approach. It was also suggested by some in the Iraqi experts group that the design of the conflict research should be focused so that it is collecting the 'right' information as opposed to highlighting issues that might be outside the scope of what the local peace process could address. In their view, doing so would help manage expectations among community members involved in the research as they would know which potential problems identified by the research could be tackled by the local peace process, and which were outside the process' scope.

However, there are advantages to having a more comprehensive and robust conflict analysis, even if the process could not focus on some of the drivers identified: namely, it would provide the complete picture of the conflict dynamics, helping designers understand the local linkages to provincial and national dynamics and the factors that could potentially undermine any potential agreement reached by the process. In this approach, the expectations of what the process could focus on would be set through the design of the process itself as it should focus on the most feasible issues to address.

**Stakeholder engagement and the principle of inclusivity are viewed by many to be one of the most difficult aspects of the design process because of several challenges.** These include:

*Traditional norms and different definitions of inclusivity.* Traditional practices and norms predominant in many of the areas where processes have occurred, leading to reluctance by key decision makers – mainly men – to welcome the inclusion of more vulnerable segments of society, like women and youth, particularly around the dialogue table. Processes have attempted to overcome such opposition using different approaches that range from including women and youth in the research phase, thereby accounting for their views of the conflict dynamics and input in the subsequent design phase; bringing women and youth into the implementation phase of the process via inclusion in the committee membership; leaning on Iraq's commitment to UNSCR 1325 and having committees trained on women, peace and security issues, thereby broadening their understanding of inclusion; having dialogue sessions with women and youth that run concurrent with the main discussion involving the principal stakeholders and infusing into the latter's sessions their input; including women in leadership positions already in the community, if any; and through long-term engagement and relationship cultivation, which over time has lessened opposition

by tribal leaders to the inclusion of women and youth, both as participants but also as local mediators facilitating the process.

In addition, communities may have a different notion of inclusivity than that of international and national organizations facilitating the process. As such, designers of processes should engage communities on this discussion to better understand their definitions, why they are important and how they fit in with the objectives of the process.

**Narrow definitions and restrictions on engagement.** It was noted by some practitioners that internationally funded projects supporting local peace processes often come with a definition of inclusion to mean a seat at the dialogue table, attaching to this output indicators that require half of the participants in the activities to be women or youth. This approach to inclusion was not seen as helpful; indeed, in many cases it was counterproductive to the aim of tackling localized drivers of conflict as attempts to fulfill the requirements would instigate opposition from the principal actors identified to resolve the conflict. Instead, a more flexible definition of inclusion is perceived to be warranted and should be contingent on the Stated objectives of any process.

Moreover, internationally funded projects come with restrictions on engaging certain actors, which have acted as an impediment to the processes. Such restrictions have either been loosely applied on a certain stakeholder group, especially political parties, or more stringently enforced on certain influential segments of a community who have political leanings towards particular political or security actors. On the former, the involvement of political actors can be viewed as countering a Stated aim of bottom-up approaches: to be community driven and non-politicized. A concern is that through the inclusion of political actors, political agendas and interests might capture the process, diluting the agency of community leaders. Local peace processes have involved political party members but in the majority of cases these have been official government actors on the local, provincial and national level, as opposed to political party leadership outside of official government positions. Some local mediators and practitioners have questioned this approach, noting that political parties have influence on the ground in many areas and cannot be ignored, especially as their exclusion might force them to play a spoiler role.

Regarding the more stringent restrictions on certain actors due to their connections to other, less well-received entities, these have materialized in one of two ways: through their placement on a sanctions' list, thereby limiting the

ability of processes to engage them due to donor conditions; or through requests from donors to not include certain actors who are linked to or affiliated with blacklisted actors. A practical example involving the former is that of a case where an influential Iraqi security actor at the local level could not be involved in the process because he failed to pass a security vetting requirement conditioned by US-funded programme.<sup>72</sup> In an example of the latter, pressure from the donor to exclude community leaders affiliated with a blacklisted person led to the halting of the process. These types of restrictions call into question the purpose of local peace processes to some degree, especially if the actors are formal or individuals who are not directly sanctioned and are wanting to participate in the process.

**Reluctance by stakeholders.** Another challenge involving stakeholder engagement and the principle of inclusivity relates to the engagement of necessary actors not supportive of the process. This links with the discussion on community legitimacy above and has included a few cases where certain religious, security or government actors have opposed either the process, the inclusion of certain individuals in the process or the stated aims of the process, leading in some cases to their boycott and emergence as a potential hinderer. Relatedly, it was noted in the international and national organizations consultation session that the involvement of tribal or religious actors can engender a negative reaction from youth and more progressive actors who are not keen on the influence of these more conservative types of authorities. In such cases, it may be necessary to integrate dialogue sessions between the different generations to find common ground on the path forward.

**Capacity building and awareness raising activities are important and need to be incorporated into the process.** There is a recognition that capacity building activities need to be integrated into the design process, which can help the local mediators, implementation committee members and government actors better understand how to address the issues mentioned in the agreements. In addition, there is need to ensure that communities understand the process is occurring in addition to the terms of any agreement reached. Recent survey data from Tal Afar Center, Ayadhiya and Zummar highlights the need for community awareness on the agreements. Asked if they are aware of the agreement brokered in their area, the majority of respondents in Tal Afar Center (73%), and Ayadhiya (58%) and nearly half in Zummar (43%) State that they have not heard of these agreements at all.<sup>73</sup>

72 The vetting requirement is called Leahy Vetting. USG-funded projects that engage security actors must ensure the actors are vetted and cleared before any activities occur. Failure to pass the vetting means the project cannot engage these actors in ways that see programme funds applied.

73 United States Institute of Peace's Conflict and Stabilization Monitoring Framework for Nineveh Province, Round 6 [www.usip.org/programs/conflict-and-stabilization-monitoring-framework](http://www.usip.org/programs/conflict-and-stabilization-monitoring-framework).

Related to this, there is a need to continuously reiterate or highlight the objective of the process during each dialogue or mediation session. This is because participants might be too focused on the session's outcome itself and, in doing so, may not be contextualizing the session within the larger picture of what the process is trying to achieve, an outcome that was noted as lessening local ownership over the process.<sup>74</sup>

### Implementation

The post-agreement phase is seen as the real start of the process, one that requires the support of government institutions. Many participants of this study noted that the real work of local peace processes start once an agreement is reached. As shown in the previous sections, these agreements are legally non-binding and deal with some issues that are outside the scope or authority of many of signatories at the local level. Those in tribal areas have also culminated in the disputed parties agreeing to drop certain demands or tribal customary practices – blood money compensation, opposition to security vetting etc. – that are potential conflict triggers with parties instead agreeing to seek recourse via formal government actors and processes. Hence, the implementation phase of the process requires relevant, influential provincial and national government actors to respond to specific points of the agreement.

Because of this need, government actor involvement at the provincial and national levels is necessary in cases where such agreements exist. Therefore, it is important that, whenever relevant, local peace processes include key government actors throughout the process – not just in the implementation stage – in order to attain their buy-in and support from the onset. In most of the cases reviewed, key government actors were involved. It was noted by one interviewee that in a couple of cases, key government actors at the provincial level were not brought into the process despite these actors being identified as key to the issues being resolved, a fact that undermined the credibility of the eventual agreement.<sup>75</sup>

Yet even when involved, the ability of government actors to support the implementation of agreements is limited by capacity constraints and fragmented decision-making processes. These constraints are endemic to the political system as a whole: Iraqi governance processes are characterized by highly centralized – and oftentimes contested – decision-making authority as well as weak formal institutions that are often captured by political groups

and used as an extension of patronage and clientelist networks to reward a narrow base of supporters and loyalists. Relatedly, many key positions within ministries are contingent on the machinations of national politics and government formation, meaning support by an institution or ministry may change if key personnel are replaced with those of different political affiliation.

Local peace agreements are impacted by these limitations in various ways. An example is the issue security vetting of families with perceived ISIL affiliation, which some local peace agreements reference. An agreed upon position reflected in these agreements is for tribal leaders to drop opposition to the return of families with perceived affiliation if they are cleared by the formal security vetting process. By agreeing to this, the local peace process not only helped overcome the prevalent problem of collective liability – a key point of contention in the post-ISIL period – but they also brought tribal actors closer to and in support of State institutions.

However, the agreements are undermined to a certain extent by the fact that the State process in question – security vetting – is widely viewed as ineffective and inefficient: the databases used to run the screening process are perceived to be partially constructed and filled with incorrect information.<sup>76</sup> In addition, different security actors maintain their own separate lists with little cooperation between them. This means that the agreements risk supporting the return of guilty individuals and preventing innocent families from return. Ultimately, this highlights the need for government processes to be effective and trustworthy if agreements are to have their intended impact.

Another example relates to national actor involvement. Established in 2007 by the administration of Nouri al-Maliki and situated within the Prime Minister's office, the NRC was given a mandate to work on supporting tribal councils; the formal military and public sector integration of tribal fighters from the *sahwa* campaign; and legal status of former military officers under the Baathist regime. From 2007 to 2014, the NRC suffered from a negative reputation as it was perceived to be a political tool of the Dawa Party, one of the dominant parties in the post-2003 period.

This situation began to change in 2014 under the premiership of Haider al-Abadi, who transferred the day-to-day managing authority to an advisor. Under new management, the NRC formed partnerships with UNDP and several international non-governmental or-

<sup>74</sup> Validation session, key government and community actors. April 2022.

<sup>75</sup> KII Practitioner, March 2022.

<sup>76</sup> Revkin, Mara Redlich. 2021. Pathways to Reintegration: Iraq – Families Formerly Associated with ISIL. United Nations Development Programme.

organizations and national NGOs via the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), which not only provided technical and capacity support to the NRC but brought the institution into processes at the local level. For the designers of these processes, the link was crucial as some of the identified drivers of tension required a national government partner to follow-up on the issues. Indeed, though the NRC had a key deficiency in that it did not have any executive making authority – this resided in the Council of Ministers, the ministries themselves or within political party power centers – and lacked a formal budget and staff with specific technical expertise, it was given a facilitation and liaising role within the government. More specifically, the NRC would utilize and leverage its position in the Prime Minister’s office and its relationship with other government entities where decision-making resides to help get a solution or response to the issues arising from local peace processes.<sup>77</sup> This provided local peace processes with a national ally working the higher levels of government, (which was helpful to both the processes even if it did not always materialize into tangible outcomes), and the NRC itself as inclusion helped it to fulfill its mandate.

This positive arrangement was recognized and the NRC advisor worked to insulate the institution from the usual political competition over leadership, rampant within the public sector, by pushing for a new institution to be established above it that reports directly to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, a powerful position that would provide it with more protection. This was achieved with the establishment of the Higher Permanent Commission for Coexistence and Communal Peace.

Ultimately, however, the NRC and the HPCCP could not escape national political jostling as both were dissolved and replaced with the Committee for Coexistence and Community Peace (CCPC) in 2019. This change also brought with it new day-to-day management, which uprooted the existing relationship the NRC had to some local peace processes.<sup>78</sup> Further changes catalysed by political shifts occurred in 2020: it was renamed to the CDSP, given new leadership and stripped of key personnel involved in local peace processes. These changes essentially severed local peace processes of the strong political will and support that existed under the NRC, rendering the CDSP in the eyes of some to be less of a partner with the ability or political will to assist certain processes.<sup>79</sup>

Agreements also require the support of development and humanitarian organizations and sustained engagement. Because agreements often deal with issues beyond the remit of the third-party sponsor or facilitator, organizations from the development and humanitarian sector are needed to help implement the points of the agreements. Some processes, like that of Tal Afar Center, have tried to move in this direction by involving development and humanitarian organizations post-agreement and via sessions that review the action-plan activities created by the implementation committee. A similar approach has been used in Zummar. Agreements have also been highlighted through the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group for Nineveh, in an attempt to gain more support from development, humanitarian and peacebuilding organizations. In the case of Ayadhiya, it was reported that humanitarian actors used to the agreement to signal their support for IDP return processes. However, it is clear that more synergies and assistance from others is needed if committees are to move forward with the implementation of the agreement successfully. Hence, long-term engagement involving peacebuilding, development and aid organizations is critical.

In the absence of long-term, varied support, there is a risk that agreements will lose the trust the process had built and sap motivation from key community actors to continue implementation efforts. Lack of sustained support may also jeopardize outcomes and, as a consequence, trust in the agreement among the broader community. Such an outcome has occurred in a few processes, per key informant interviews, highlighting the need to rethink the overall modality of support given to processes and agreements. One local authority from Yathrib mentioned that peace processes would be better served if they occurred after development and reconstruction efforts were completed, believing that tackling social tensions would be easier in an environment that has seen infrastructure rebuilt and local markets and job opportunities revived.<sup>80</sup> A similar sentiment was echoed by a leading figure in Mahalabiya, who notes that the agreement’s ability to facilitate the return of IDPs is limited due to economic constraints impacting the area.<sup>81</sup>

These remarks highlight that the long-term success of peace processes and agreements is invariably tied to development and reconstruction outcomes, precipitating the need for stronger connections between peace-building, development and aid organizations.

<sup>77</sup> KII Practitioner, March 2022; Author’s own experience.

<sup>78</sup> One of the first acts of the new management was to cancel all existing MoUs with international and national organizations.

<sup>79</sup> KII Practitioner (multiple), March 2022.

<sup>80</sup> KII Local Authority Yathrib, March 2022.

<sup>81</sup> KII Local Authority Muhallabiyah, March 2022.



## Government Engagement

The involvement of national, provincial and local government actors brings a certain legitimacy to the process, which might encourage more participation among the needed segments of the community. There is a general consensus among supporters of local peace processes that constructive government involvement in the process gives it more credibility and, depending on the institution involved and their capacity, increases an agreement's chances of sustainability or at the very least prolongs the window for implementation. It can also help overcome reluctance among some stakeholders to be involved in the process, though this is contingent on the nature of the relationship between communities and the government actors: in some areas government actors are not trusted and their direct engagement could undermine the process. At the same time, there is a need to make sure that government authorities are not hijacking the design process when involved, as this would weaken community ownership of the process.

Processes themselves can look to bridge the divide between communities and government authorities. As shown in the previous section, local peace processes have looked to repair or strengthen the relationship and interactions between communities and government actors and institutions. This is because conflict research has demonstrated the need to mitigate community grievances towards the State, which usually center around issues of exclusion from political and governing processes and unequal service delivery outcomes. In one process reviewed, the process itself focusses on alleviating community tensions and grievances about service delivery in a disputed territory, taking a gradual approach that focuses on one specific service to address through targeted engagement between community leaders and district, provincial, Kurdistan Regional Government and national authorities. This approach might offer an example to entities working on the implementation of agreements calling for improved governance and service provision.

**Best practices** with regards to government involvement in process led by international and national processes include:

- *Bring into the process relevant national government actors when needed.* This engagement should occur throughout the process to maximize support and should be through the research phase of the process. In cases where the objective may not need national linkages, these actors' involvement may be superfluous and counterproductive, especially if the relationship with the local actors and communities in dispute is tenuous.
- *Identify a role for national government actors to play while setting realistic expectations on what they are able to achieve.* If national government actors are involved, their role in the process and with regards to any agreement reached should be clearly defined and within the boundaries of what is realistic to achieve. For example, some agreements call on the government to provide better services as this is seen as a key factor that would help improve peaceful coexistence between communities. Here, the third-party facilitator of the process should make it clear to the processes' participants that there is no immediate solution to such shortcomings, and that it is contingent on both external variables and the engagement of multiple government actors over an extended period of time.

## General

Local peace processes in Iraq require more flexible funding and project cycles. One criticism of some international donor support to local peace processes in Iraq is that budgets and short project timeframes do not always correspond to the complex reality of conducting local peace processes, which require more flexibility in terms of financial resources and duration. Because of this, international and national organizations need to consider what can be done with the resources available and within the timeline specified by donors. For their part, international donors wanting to support local peace processes should attempt to increase both resources and timeline to ensure that local peace processes can be implemented, understanding that the attainment of a peace agreement is really only the first step in the process. Indeed, a recognition by donors that supporting local peace processes requires a long-term commitment would go a long way in overcoming a common challenge found in the Iraqi experience: project cycles too short for the proper implementation of agreements. In addition, international donors supporting local peace processes need to either provide guidance to the third-party mediating entity on how to engage actors that might be blacklisted by the donor, or reconsider supporting the process overall if the third-party mediator is not allowed to engage such actors.

Local peace processes also require an integrative approach involving the systemic support of and coordination between peacebuilding, development and humanitarian actors. There is a need to involve and integrate development and humanitarian actors in supporting these processes if agreements are to be sustained. The development of the *Durable Solutions Framework*<sup>82</sup> as well as coordination structures like the *Peace and Reconciliation Working Group* in Nineveh governorate, and the Durable Solutions'

82 United Nations. 2021. Resolving Internal Displacement in Iraq: Interagency Durable Solutions Strategic and Operational Framework.

Area-Based Coordination mechanism has helped provide a foundation for such support but this has yet to translate into direct, coordinated support for the implementation of local peace agreements. As one interviewee noted, the existing coordination mechanisms are merely information sharing platforms and more needs to be done to encourage and facilitate joint programming among and between peacebuilding, development and humanitarian actors.<sup>83</sup>

Third-party organizations supporting local peace processes require staff with specialized skills and knowledge of both the local context and technical aspects of peace processes, dialogue, negotiation and mediation. Without these, initiatives will likely face difficulties. Yet the peacebuilding sector was noted to have a high turnover rate, resulting in the need to constantly recruit. One method of overcoming this challenge has been to rely on local mediators and short-term technical experts to fill some of the gaps. On the latter, it was noted that having technical experts involved in key parts of the process was vital. An example on how this has been applied: many processes engaged international and Iraqi legal experts to review agreements prior to their finalization in order to guarantee that they are not infringing upon key legal principles.

The disputed nature of some territories and a fragmented security landscape complicate local peace processes and agreements. Another constraint preventing government actors from following up on or supporting relevant points in the agreement is the disputed status of some of the districts where agreements have been brokered. Here, an ongoing political conflict between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government hampers the ability of actors to address points requiring government institutions because doing so could exacerbate tensions between both parties, especially on issues related to security. This means that bottom-up, informal agreements run up against a long-standing top-down political dispute that must be resolved in order to unlock and achieve sustainable peace in these communities.

At the same time, however, local peace processes conducted in some disputed areas have shown that there is space and willingness to mediate on conflict drivers and community grievances. An example of this is in Zummar, where the process has made some gains in helping find potential solutions to some land related conflicts between Arab and Kurdish communities. In

general, local peace processes in disputed territories may be able to gradually provide the needed pressure and momentum for the both governments to reengage in negotiation over the issue.<sup>84</sup>

The framing of the local peace process matters and can facilitate or impede buy-in and engagement from key actors and stakeholders. Local mediators and experts highlight the importance of properly framing the peace process in order to gain the needed buy-in of key actors and stakeholders. Indeed, most of the local peace processes and agreements reviewed were not phrased as such; rather, they were given titles that more accurately reflected the objective of the process, with *social cohesion* and *peaceful coexistence* being used in many cases to describe them. One term that proved controversial in the immediate post-ISIL period is reconciliation, which was a purported goal of some processes. The term engenders sensitivities in the Iraqi context for a few reasons. First, there does not exist a common definition of reconciliation; given the ubiquitous grievances that exist among all communities and that conflict has impacted each differently, reconciliation means different things to each community. At the same time, the term is generally associated with the political endeavour to reconcile the Sunni political leaders with the post-2003 State and, therefore, the meaning at the local level lacks credence. Second, some community leaders have been hesitant to embrace the term as doing so would be an acknowledgment that deep divisions in their areas exist, something they claim is only a product of political actors spurring or manipulating superficial cleavages to mobilize support. In some cases, especially those involving the Yazidi community, reconciliation as an outcome is deemed to be too sensitive at the moment to pursue as grievance stemming from the atrocities of ISIL are still fresh. For these reasons and others, terms like social cohesion and the promotion of peaceful coexistence have featured more prominently.

## 2.5 LINKS WITH GLOBAL GOOD PRACTICE

This section compares the ways in which local peace processes in Iraq link with some key global good practice principles identified in Chapter One. The principles selected include inclusivity, the use of local mediators, ways the process engaged informal actors and practices, terms of the peace agreements, and agreement implementation mechanisms.

<sup>83</sup> KII Practitioner, March 2022.

<sup>84</sup> Article 140 of the constitution provides the steps forward to take to settle the disputed statuses. To date, these steps have not been implemented.

The assessment is presented in the table below.

Global Good Practice	Iraqi Experience
<p><b>Inclusivity:</b> Local peace processes should in principle strive for as much inclusion as possible though this should be guided by the objective of the local peace process. The definition of inclusion should also be expanded to include engagement beyond the dialogue table.</p>	<p>In general, local peace processes have tried to be as inclusive as possible and within the Stated objective of the process. Yet, as discussed in the preceding sections, this effort has run into challenges related to donor restrictions, different definitions of inclusion among the community; traditional norms and tribal practices; and opposition from stakeholders towards the process or certain actors. The Iraqi experience has shown that many local peace processes have navigated these challenges by finding other ways to engage needed actors and segments of the community; leveraging long-standing relationships to bring vulnerable populations in; or by shifting the aims of the process, showing that these peace processes generally align with global good practice. One area where some local peace processes in Iraq have not fully synced with global good practice is with the direct involvement of IDPs into the dialogue process, instead relying on tribal, community or government representatives to speak on their behalf.</p>
<p><b>Local Mediators:</b> Local peace processes are better served when local mediators play a meaningful role throughout the process. While there may be concerns with biases and issues of neutrality, these are outweighed by several benefits, such as a thorough understanding of local context and customs and strong relationships with community actors. Local mediators can play several roles, but three stand out: helping set the conditions and groundwork for the process (called facilitation); facilitating dialogue; and conducting direct mediation to resolve the conflict issue. Local mediators are usually individuals but they can also be organizations or structures, such as NGOs and local peace committees.</p>	<p>Local peace processes in Iraq have all used local mediators to fulfil key tasks. These range from partaking in research activities, facilitating confidence building measures and intra- and inter-community dialogue sessions, conducting shuttle mediation, and helping in the monitoring and implementation of agreements. Such roles correspond to those highlighted by global good practices. Local mediators were often individuals but some processes used existing structures (i.e., local peace committees or Wisemen Committees), also keeping with global practice.</p>
<p><b>Informal Actors and Practices.</b> Whenever relevant, local peace processes and agreements should engage informal practices and actors and attempt to minimize the impact of harmful informal practices.</p>	<p>Most local peace processes have both engaged tribal actors and dealt with addressing exclusionary tribal customary practices that were aggravating tensions in the post-ISIL period. In doing so, these processes have attempted to connect tribal authorities and practices to formal actors and mechanisms (e.g., government compensation mechanism) and bring practices in line with both Iraqi and international human rights law.</p>

**Peace Agreements:** Should address drivers of conflict and attempt to move from notions of negative to positive peace. If agreements cannot address the drivers of conflict directly, they should include a consensus on how to do so. Agreements should also try to be as precise in language as possible and include specific implementation modalities.

Most of the peace agreements respond to identified drivers of conflict by finding consensus on how to address the issue. In addition, the underlying themes of many agreements include the terms that allow IDPs to return, especially those families with perceived ISIL affiliation; the promotion of peaceful co-existence and reconciliation between communities; the strengthening of ties between communities and the State, and the mitigation of use of tribal exclusion practices. Language is often general, apart from some provisions dealing with tribal customary practices. Several agreements mention the establishment or use of existing committees to implement the agreement. Agreements are usually supplemented with an action plan to guide implementation

**Agreement Implementation:** An implementation mechanism designed in the peace agreement can play a monitoring, implementation, verification or dispute resolution role. This mechanism can be comprised of parties to the conflict, civil society groups, international actors or a mixture of all.

The implementation mechanism is usually a LPC or separate committee formed after the agreement. The mechanism is comprised of the parties to the agreement and civil society actors. International actors have helped support implementation and, in one specific case, the monitoring of the agreement (Ayadhiya).



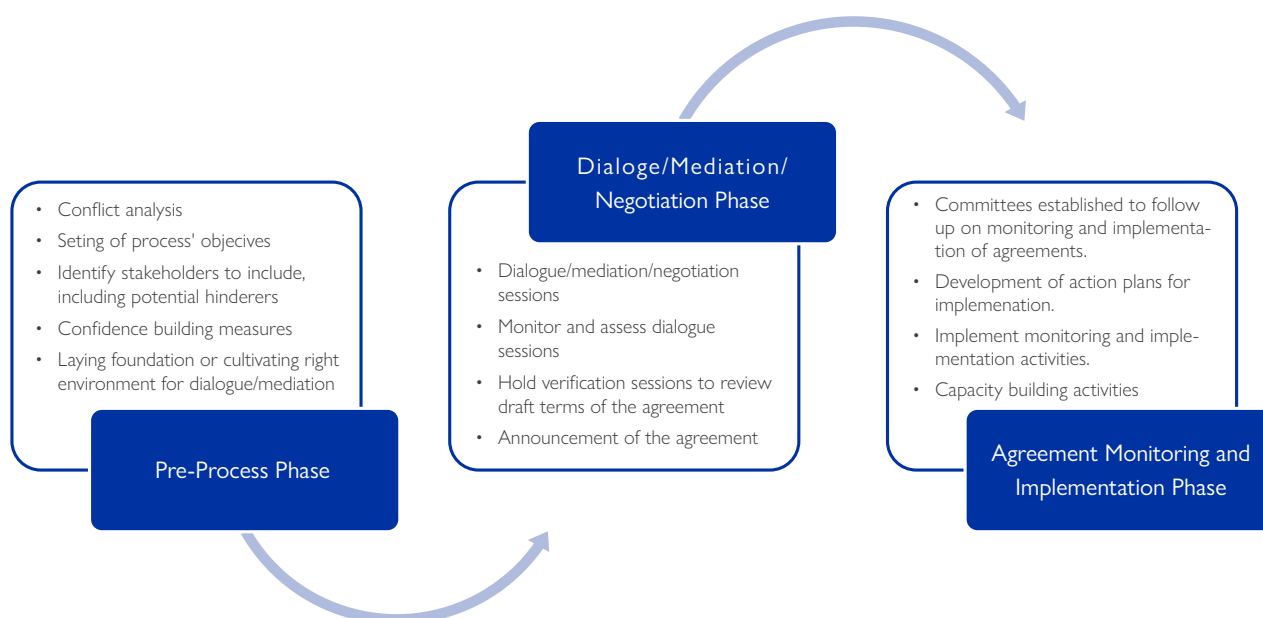
Figure 7: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS AND TOOLS FOR DESIGNING, MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES

This chapter provides guidance and practical tools that can be used by donors and organizations seeking to support or directly implement local peace processes. They are based on the lessons learned and best practices highlighted in the preceding chapters. While the audience is mainly for those working on Iraq, the guidance may be applicable to other contexts. The chapter starts by providing an overview of the phases that constitute a local peace process, before unpacking each phase in more detail. Recommendations, key considerations and some practical tools are presented as well.

### 3.1 LOCAL PEACE PROCESS PHASES

Though not always the case, local peace processes have some variations of the following phases:



### 3.2 PRE-PROCESS PHASE

The pre-process phase consists of research, planning and design, and preparing the conditions so that local peace processes are more durable and sustainable. The main aims of this phase are to:

- Better understand the conflict identified through a robust conflict analysis.
- Identify what can realistically be worked on given: the mandate of the organization, available resources, feasibility to achieve identified objectives, and political and community space and will afforded to implement a process.
- Establish the conditions necessary for the process to occur, through identified confidence building measures.

These are explored in more detail below.

#### 3.2.1 CONFLICT ANALYSIS

To address these issues, the third-party mediator organization must first conduct a conflict analysis to gain full understanding of the conflict dynamics, including the answers to key questions concerning the conflict profile, drivers of conflict, stakeholders and linkages to provincial and national levels. These include:

- **Conflict Profile:** Is there a history of conflict in the territory focused on?
- **Conflict Profile:** If so, what does it entail? What has created and cultivated this conflict (e.g., historical events, previous government strategies or policies)?

- **Drivers of Conflict.** What are the proximate and structural drivers of conflict, also known as the immediate and root causes of the conflict?
- **Stakeholders.** Who are the main stakeholders' groups and parties to the conflict? This should include influential actors, both enablers and hinderers. Which communities have been directly and indirectly impacted by the conflict?
- **Stakeholders.** What are their motivations and interests? Which issues divide them? Which can act as connectors? What are the sources of authority and power for influential stakeholders?
- **Linkages.** What linkages exist between the local conflict, and provincial and national dynamics? Are there legal and administrative orders that are linked to the conflict drivers identified?
- **Existing Peace Structures.** Are there any existing peace structures, such as existing agreements, LPCs, and non-violent dispute mechanisms? If so, what is their status?

Several conflict analysis toolkits exist that can help organizations and practitioners structure their approach. The key is

to make sure answers to the above questions are answered as they are critical to the design process. The conflict analysis also needs to be grounded in a gender-sensitive lens – this will allow the analysis to capture the varied impact of the conflict. A robust conflict analysis would be one that begins with a desk review of existing studies, if available, which can help answer some of the above questions while shaping and sharpening the exact questions that need answering by primary data collection activities.

### 3.2.2 PLANNING AND DESIGN SESSION

Once the conflict analysis has been done, a key step in the pre-process phase is to hold planning and design sessions that review the information collected and lead to the identification of the following:

- Whether or not an intervention is feasible – is there enough community and political will and space for such an intervention?
- The objectives of the process – what are the issues and drivers of conflict that the process is attempting to address?
- The main parties to the conflict, key stakeholders to include and potential hinderers;



Figure 8: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

- The ways in which provincial and national actors and dynamics linked to the issues and objectives identified need to be accounted for;
- Confidence building measures that may be needed prior to the start of the process and that can help establish the conditions necessary for the process to begin;
- The thematic expertise needed by the third party facilitating organization. This may include staff with expertise in international law, transitional justice, housing, land and property dispute resolution;
- The local mediators and their roles;
- The main activities of the process, e.g., intra- and intercommunity dialogue sessions, shuttle mediation, negotiation sessions;
- Resources needed to complete the process;
- Anticipated challenges; and
- Other organizations, processes and/or actors involved in the area which may be working on issues tied to the objectives of the process.

### 3.2.3 PRE-PROCESS PHASE RECOMMENDATIONS/ GUIDANCE

The pre-process phase is one that helps map out the process as a whole. Key considerations and recommendations related to conflict analysis and planning phases include:

- When conducting the conflict analysis, local mediators should be engaged – defined here as individuals but also civil society organizations or peace structures – familiar with the area to both help adapt the conflict analysis questions to the local context – so that they are asked in conflict-sensitive manner – and conduct the actual research. This means that donors and organizations supporting and implementing peace process will need to account for the training of local mediators on research techniques and skills.
- If key stakeholders and actors identified in the conflict analysis are blacklisted, formally or informally, this should be communicated to the donor directly for guidance on how to proceed. In some cases, donors – working within their own governments – may be able to grant exemptions for those on sanctions lists. In situations where it is not possible to engage the identified actors in the process due to donor restrictions, the donor and implementing partner should reconsider the purpose of the intervention and whether proceeding with a local peace process is feasible and constructive in the absence of those stakeholders.
- When identifying stakeholders to include and how, designers of the process should take a more flexible definition of inclusivity – in certain contexts where more patriarchal, traditional norms prevail, it may not be possible to engage women and youth in the same manner as tribal, religious or political actors. Ultimately, the objective of the process should guide the principle of inclusion, and designers should incorporate other ways to include groups not participating in the main dialogue (See Chapter 1 and 2 for more details).
- In this phase, donors and implementing partners should consider whether they are best positioned to engage in the conflict identified and the objectives sought. That is, comparative advantage should play a role in determining whether to implement a local peace process as there might be other organizations and entities better positioned to take the issue on. Hence, coordination with other peacebuilding actors should occur. Participating in existing working groups – such as the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group for Nineveh, the Returns Working Group – or inviting peacebuilding organizations to be part of the planning and design sessions can help identify comparative advantage questions while also ensuring that local peace processes are connected to others working in the area or on similar issues. Coordination with development and humanitarian organizations should also occur at this stage, especially if conflict drivers have been identified that require support from those sectors.
- If it is determined that the drivers of conflict are linked to national issues or require a national government actor to help address them, be clear on the expectations, both in terms of what the process can achieve overall and what the national actor can achieve. This will help offset community expectations that do not match the reality of what the government actor can do.
- Related to the above, a clear communication strategy and talking points need to be devised, so that the community and key stakeholders are all on the same page about expectations and what the processes can and cannot achieve.

### 3.3 DIALOGUE/MEDIATION/ NEGOTIATION PHASE

During this phase, the process will be implementing the main activities leading to an agreement, with dialogue, mediation and negotiation being some of the main approaches used. One key takeaway from the research undertaken by the toolkit is the need to improve learning efforts on the impact of local peace processes beyond the attainment of an agreement. That is, practitioners and supporters of local peace processes need to improve their ability to monitor and evaluate what the process is achieving and how. A step towards this is to focus on monitoring and assessing the dialogue phase<sup>85</sup> of the process and the terms of the agreements reached. These are explored in more detail below.

#### 3.3.1 MONITORING AND ASSESSING DIALOGUE SESSIONS AND AGREEMENTS

While the aim of the overall process is the attainment of an agreement, this phase can also bring about attitudinal, relationship and behavioural changes that can better tell the story of what the process achieved. With this in mind, it is important to monitor this phase of the process.

#### Observation Protocol

One tool to do this is an observation protocol, which is a series of questions to be answered by third-party observers of the dialogue session. The tool is meant to better assess what each dialogue session – and the phase overall – is achieving and can help donors, implementing partners and local mediators identify and understand changes induced by the session as well as such details as to *how* the process culminated in an agreement or *why* it failed to broker one. Given that this phase is iterative in nature, information gleaned from observation can also help mediators adjust to the challenges and opportunities identified.

An observation protocol can cover a range of issues depending on context and what the process is trying to achieve. At the minimum, however, it should entail a focus on the following:

- Planned and unplanned outcomes;
- Dialogue dynamics;
- Stakeholder dynamics.



Figure 9: Yad Abulqadir/IOM Iraq

<sup>85</sup> Given that dialogue has been the main activity in local peace processes in Iraq, it will be the main modality highlighted by this section.



Questions and guidance points around these themes are presented in the table below.

Focus Themes	Question	Guidance Note
Outcomes	What were the results of the session?	It is important to list and describe the outcomes of the dialogue session. Outcomes in this context refer to any agreements or consensus reached on the drivers of conflict identified. It could also involve the raising of issues by the conflict parties that are outside the agreed agenda.
	How are the dialogue outcomes aligned with the objective of the dialogue process?	It is important for mediators and supporters of local peace processes to assess how the outcomes speak to the overall objective of the process. Are the outcomes working towards the objective? How?
Dialogue Dynamics	How would you describe the overall atmosphere of the dialogue session?	Observers of the session assess the overall atmosphere of the dialogue. One way to do so is to focus on the type of dialogue style that emerged among the parties, which ranges from accommodating, where one side concedes certain points to the other; compromising, where both sides give up certain unacceptable positions in order to move towards an agreement; collaborating, where the general atmosphere is described as both sides demonstrating the will to solve the issues at hand; avoiding, which is a situation where one or both sides do not want to discuss the issues at hand; or competing, which is where one or both sides take a hard-line, conflicting position on the discussion items. Ideally, the observer will describe whether the atmosphere changed throughout the dialogue session, something that can provide a more nuanced description of the dialogue.
	Which discussion points were most contentious? Why?	The observer should note and describe the topics of discussion that elicited the most discussion and assesses the reasons why. On the latter, things to consider include the findings of the conflict analysis, which can help contextualize the dialogue discussion and provide insight as to why the issue was controversial. This type of information can help the designers of the process understand and assess the position of the participants towards the topics of discussion and what is behind certain positions taken (e.g., political interests etc.).
	Which discussion points were least contentious? Why?	Similar to the above, the observer should note and describe the topics of discussion that went over relatively smoothly.

Participant Dynamics	Did any particular actors dominate the dialogue discussion?	These questions can help mediators recognize whether asymmetrical power relationships are impacting the dialogue session and the extent to which participants are active and engaged in the session.
	Did any actors appear intimidated by others in attendance?	
	Was everyone given an opportunity to provide their input to the discussion items?	
	How was the non-verbal interaction of participants during the session and during the breaks?	
	Were any key principles missing from the dialogue? Why?	

It is imperative that the information gathered from the observation protocol be reviewed and analyzed by the third-party mediators after the session. Doing so can help inform what adjustments need to be made to keep the process moving towards its objective. This can be done in a reflection session following the dialogue where the mediator, observers and supporters of the process can go through and discuss the above questions in detail.

*Agreement Assessment*

If the dialogue phase is successful, it will culminate in an agreement. Once this occurs, the third-party mediator should assess the terms of the agreement against the conflict drivers identified in the conflict analysis phase. This will not only showcase the impact of the process but will also highlight potential follow-up actions that might be needed to in the implementation phase (see section 4.4). It can also signal out drivers of conflict – especially structural, deep rooted ones too complex for the local process to solve – that were not addressed and which might undermine the agreement in the long term.

A simple way to conduct the assessment is to go categorize the terms of the agreement under the identified drivers of conflict, as shown in the following table.

The table shows sample drivers of conflict and simplified agreement points that are inspired by actual agreements.



Figure 10: Karrar Ali/PPO

Drivers of Conflict Identified (proximate and structural)	Pact Provisions
Exclusion/disconnect from security arrangement of area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a coordination mechanism involving tribal leaders, local government authorities and local security actors who meet once a month to discuss security concerns.</li> <li>• Commitment by security actors to provide better practices at security checkpoints.</li> <li>• Commitment by security actors to increase patrols in areas of concern.</li> </ul>
Return of families with perceived affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment by tribal leaders to renounce and denounce revenge acts of violence.</li> <li>• Commitment by tribal leaders to abide by security vetting outcomes.</li> <li>• Commitment by tribal leaders and local authorities to help in the return and reintegration process and mediate the cases of families cleared to return but are blocked from doing so based on security concerns.</li> <li>• Commitment by security actors to agree to review lists of accused families with perceived affiliation.</li> </ul>

### 3.3.1 DIALOGUE PHASE RECOMMENDATIONS/ GUIDANCE:

- It is important that stakeholder engagement occurs prior to the first dialogue session in order to set the agenda points of the session and what the session aims to achieve;
- Ground rules for the dialogue sessions need to be established and agreed to in advance of the session and reiterated prior to the session
- Oftentimes in a conflict between two groups, intra-group dialogue will first need to occur before the inter-group sessions begin. This is so there is internal agreement on how to deal with the contentious issues vis-à-vis the other party, making the intergroup sessions more productive.
- Dialogue sessions need to be monitored and assessed by third-party observers, something that can help both demonstrate the impact of each individual session and also identify challenges and opportunities to attaining an agreement (see observation protocol in section 3.3.1).
- Local mediators should be used to facilitate the session. Creating facilitator teams comprised of two or more local mediators can increase trust among the parties and equip the process with different, complementary skill sets. This will put the process in a better position to resolve issues that arise.
- It is important that local mediators and/or other facilitators of the dialogue understand stakeholder red-lines, their interests and potential areas of compromise beforehand to help steer the dialogue towards consensus outcomes.
- Local mediators may need to engage in shuttle-mediation activities in between the dialogue sessions, as necessary.
- Once an agreement is reached, validation sessions need to occur. These sessions should involve thematic and legal experts as well as community members, especially from those segments of the population who may have been underrepresented in or excluded from the dialogue table due to their inability to have influence over the conflict drivers. These sessions are critical to broadening inclusion and buy-in; and identifying troubling or exclusionary aspects of the agreement. The feedback from these sessions should then be addressed in the main dialogue track.
- The terms of the agreement should be compared against the drivers of tension and conflict identified in the conflict analysis phase (see Agreement Assessment in section 3.3.1).
- The agreement should mandate the mechanism for implementation (i.e., follow-up committee or some other entity responsible for monitoring and/or implementation).

### 3.4 AGREEMENT MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

As previously highlighted, monitoring and implementing the agreement is considered to be one of the most difficult phases. The following are recommendations and considerations that can serve as a tool for third-party mediators and others supporting an agreement's monitoring and implementation.

- Ensure there is a dissemination and public awareness strategy for the agreement. As highlighted, one limitation of current processes is the relatively low level of awareness about the agreements among segments of the broader community. Such a strategy can involve activities like town-hall discussions on the agreement and the publication of the agreement in local media and social media outlets. Implementation and monitoring mechanisms can be separate – that is, a follow-up committee/group/structure could lead implementation efforts while a civil society group could be tasked with third-party monitoring. Ensuring the implementation and monitoring mechanisms are established with community input and legitimacy is key.
- The monitoring and implementation phase provides an opportunity for groups and communities not directly involved around the dialogue table to increase their participation in the process. This should factor into the monitoring and implementation mechanisms that are designed.
- Terms of reference (ToR) for the committee/group/structure tasked with monitoring and/or implementing the agreement need to be developed. This provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the members as well as criteria for increasing or decreasing membership in the body. ToRs can also clarify the responsibilities of the committee in relation to other existing informal and formal processes and institutions, including district and provincial governing council, which may be needed to aid the agreement's implementation. These can be developed with input and guidance from the facilitators of the dialogue sessions.
- An action plan that provides guidance and practical roles and responsibilities for the implementation mechanism should be developed jointly with dialogue participants and with the input and feedback of other community segments. The action-plan should lay out actions that need to be taken to operationalize the agreement's terms.
- Capacity building activities for the committees established may need to occur so that members have the skills and know-how to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- Indicators should also be developed that track the progress of implementation. These indicators should be SMART<sup>86</sup> and developed in an inclusive and participatory manner so that they are relevant to local dynamics.
- Where relevant, the implementation phase should bring in influential government actors to help with the implementation of the agreement, particularly the provisions that fall under the purview of government authorities.
- Implementation of the agreement will require the engagement and support of development actors and organizations. It also needs better coordination between peacebuilding, development and humanitarian actors. These should factor into the implementation phase activities.
- The implementation phase requires long-term commitments and, as such, donors need to provide adequate resources for this phase to commence and make measurable progress.



Figure 11: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

<sup>86</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

## APPENDIX

## LOCAL PEACE PROCESSES IN IRAQ REVIEWED

Location of Local Peace Process	Main Drivers of Conflict/Issues Focused on	Date of Agreement
Hawija district, Kirkuk governorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting return of IDPs</li> <li>• Dropping of collective liability/punishment towards displaced Sunni Arab community</li> <li>• Amending harmful tribal practices;</li> <li>• Countering violent extremism</li> <li>• Supporting rule of law and formal security and justice processes</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2017
Tikrit, Salah al-Din governorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allaying tribal tensions and preventing revenge act of violence following Camp Speicher Massacre</li> <li>• Supporting rule of law and formal security and justice processes</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2014
Yathrib, Salahadin governorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dropping of collective liability/punishment of displaced Sunni Arab community</li> <li>• Compensation demands (shifting from negative tribal practice to formal compensation mechanism)</li> <li>• Security concerns</li> <li>• Supporting rule of law and formal security and justice processes</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2016
Ayadhiya, subdistrict of Tal Afar district, Nineveh governorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting return of IDPs, especially those with perceived affiliation</li> <li>• Dropping collective liability/punishment</li> <li>• Amending or preventing use of negative tribal practices</li> <li>• Countering violent extremism</li> <li>• Security concerns, including security vetting process</li> <li>• Supporting rule of law and formal security and justice processes</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2018 Amended agreement was announced in 2020

Tal Afar Center, administrative center of the district (Nineveh Province)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allaying tensions between Sunni and Shia Turkmen communities</li> <li>• Supporting return of IDPs</li> <li>• Dropping collective liability/punishment</li> <li>• Reducing tensions with IDPs with perceived ISIL affiliation</li> <li>• Dropping negative tribal practices</li> <li>• Countering violent extremism</li> <li>• Security concerns, including security vetting process</li> <li>• Supporting rule of law and formal security and justice processes</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2020.
Zummar, subdistrict of Tal Afar District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allaying tensions between Arab and Kurdish communities</li> <li>• Supporting return of IDPs</li> <li>• Dropping collective liability/punishment</li> <li>• Settling land disputes in Bardiyah and Hamad Agha/Kharab al-Ashq villages</li> <li>• Countering violent extremism</li> <li>• Supporting rule of law and formal security and justice processes</li> </ul>	<p>Framework agreement announced in 2020.</p> <p>Follow-up agreement announced finding consensus on how to resolve land dispute in Bardiyah village.</p> <p>Process focused on land dispute in Hamad Agha/Kharab al-Ashq ongoing</p>
Hamdaniya district, Nineveh governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allaying tensions between Christian and Shabak communities through the addressing of three issues: local administration; land disputes; and cultural identity.</li> </ul>	<p>No agreement reached.</p> <p>Process ongoing/pending.</p> <p>Note: an agreement was reached in 2012 in Hamdaniya between the Christian and Shabak communities. This agreement was specific to a local driver of tension during that period. The process in the post-ISIL period expanded to cover issues of administration, land disputes and cultural identity. This process is ongoing.</p>
Tal Kief district, Nineveh governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving service delivery;</li> <li>• Strengthening relationship between government actors;</li> </ul>	Process is not seeking a formal agreement. Instead, it found agreement on service delivery issues to address.

Qayyarah, subdistrict of Mosul, Nineveh governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived ISIL affiliation</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in August 2021.
Muhalabiya, subdistrict of Mosul, Nineveh governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived affiliation</li> <li>Countering violent extremism;</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2020
Shirqat, Shirqat district, Salahadin governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived affiliation</li> </ul>	N/A
Anbar governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs</li> <li>Countering violent extremism</li> <li>Supporting rule of law and justice and security processes (terms of revised agreement)</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2016. Revised in 2018.
Western Anbar (al-Qa'em and Hit) <i>Note: two processes were conducted in al-Qa'em, with one acting as a framework agreement for al-Qa'em and Hit and the other as a specific negotiation on the return of IDPs with perceived ISIL affiliation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived affiliation</li> <li>Promoting restorative/transition justice, including the need for compensation</li> <li>Countering violent extremism</li> <li>Supporting rule of law and justice and security processes</li> </ul>	Framework agreement announced in 2021. IDP return agreement announced in 2021.
Rawa, subdistrict of Aneh, Anbar governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived affiliation</li> <li>Countering violent extremism</li> </ul>	N/A
Habbaniya district, Anbar governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived affiliation</li> <li>Countering violent extremism</li> </ul>	Agreement announced in 2021
Basra governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting rule of law and justice and security processes</li> <li>Negating negative tribal practices;</li> <li>Addressing attacks on public sector employees</li> </ul>	Agreement in 2021
Tuz Kharmato district, Salahadin governorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs with perceived affiliation</li> </ul>	N/A

## MAIN FRAMING QUESTIONS

Consultation sessions and key information interviews attempted to unpack specific questions related to design, relevance, impact and sustainability in order to extract lessons learned and best practices from the Iraqi experience with local peace processes thus far. These included the following:

### Design

- Why were local peace processes deemed to be an appropriate approach to implement?
- What were the Stated objectives of the process and how were they developed?
- What were the phases and elements/activities that constituted the process overall?
- What contextual and resource-related factors influenced the design of the process?
- To what extent was national and local buy-in and ownership of the process fostered?
- To what extent was community legitimacy ensured?
- How was the principle of inclusivity incorporated into the overall design?
- Were there limitations to this principle in terms of achieving the objectives of the process?

### Relevance

- What drivers of conflict are local peace processes attempting to address? How were these identified?
- What activities within the process were most and least appropriate to deal with these drivers?
- How do local peace processes link to other similar national and subnational efforts to mitigate conflict?
- To what extent do local peace processes link with the official mandates of national and subnational government actors? If such a link exists, how were officials engaged in these processes? What were their views towards them (competing, accommodating, co-opting etc)?

### Impact

- To what extent were the objective and drivers of conflict identified addressed in the processes and reflected in the agreements produced?
- What was the underlying strategy with regards to community dissemination and awareness raising about the agreements?
- What challenges emerged throughout the process and how were they handled?
- What has been the community response to the agreements produced?
- To what extent are the agreements being honoured and implemented?
- What other outcomes – intended and unintended – were produced by the process?

### Sustainability

- What monitoring and implementation mechanisms were established for the agreements produced?
- What has worked most/least effectively in terms of monitoring and implementation of agreements?
- Are the agreements still considered valid and/or appropriate to the current context?
- For peace structures and individuals involved in monitoring and implementation, were capacities sufficiently developed for them to handle such tasks?
- What resources and capacities are needed at a local, provincial and national level to help sustain the monitoring and implementation of the agreements?

## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

A total of 16 Interviews were conducted with practitioners, local authorities and national government representatives. Interviews were held under terms of anonymity in order to encourage more honest and open discussion on the subject. As such, names are withheld.



Practitioners interviewed include those from the following organizations:

- GiZ (former staff involved in managing local peace processes);
- International Organization for Migration (former staff involved in managing local peace processes);
- Nonviolent Peace Force (former staff involved in monitoring local peace agreement);
- Peace Paradigms Organization;
- United Nations Mediation Support Unit;
- United Nations Development Programme – Iraq;

- United States Institute of Peace (multiple);

Local authorities interviewed represent the following districts:

- Yathrib;
- Zummar;
- Hamdaniya;
- Tal Afar;
- Mahalibiya;
- Ayadhiya

National authorities interviewed represent the following institutions:

- National Security Advisory;
- Former staff of National Reconciliation and Follow-up Committee in the Prime Minister's Office.



Figure 12: Zaid Dadoosh/PPO

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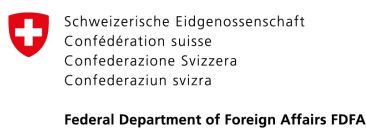
## IOM IRAQ

[iraq.iom.int](http://iraq.iom.int)

[iomiraq@iom.int](mailto:iomiraq@iom.int)

UNAMI Compound (Diwan 2),  
International Zone,  
Baghdad/Iraq

     
@IOMIraq



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