

Lessons Learned and Strategic Operationalisation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Pacific

2025 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture Informal Regional Consultation

This summary note provides an initial attempt to compile an overview of the existing regional peacebuilding architecture in the Pacific region and provides concrete recommendations for the development partners and donor community on how the Ocean of Pacific Peacebuilding Architecture can be strengthened to ensure impactful implementation of global and regional commitments on peacebuilding and sustaining peace - including the Communique of the 53rd Pacific Forum Leaders Meeting (Tonga, August 2024)

These recommendations provide valuable considerations for the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review, as well as aim to encourage further discussions and dialogue on regional peacebuilding architecture in the Pacific.

The Pacific region is recognised as one of the most vulnerable regions to the consequences of climate change, including through sea-level rise, ocean acidification, ecosystem impacts and extreme weather events. However, the region also faces emerging conflicts and migration, instability and exacerbated levels of poverty and inequality.

The key takeaways from the discussion include:

The Pacific policy frameworks offer comprehensive guidance on ‘human security’, but not on the ‘peace’ element of the ‘peace and security’ policy.

The Pacific regional policy frameworks provide for comprehensive and holistic policies that bridge the peace-development-humanitarian Nexus (Triple Nexus) a human security lens. [The Boe Declaration](#) and its [Action Plan](#) outline a human security perspective on addressing the challenges facing the region. This perspective implies the analysis of diverse risks, including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political risks. [The 2050 Strategy for the Pacific Blue Pacific Continent](#) further draws out this connection, serving as an example of Member States’ vision of more comprehensive security. As climate change is one of the main security threats in the Pacific, [the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific \(FRDP\)](#) provides guidance to diverse stakeholders for building resilience to climate change and disasters in the Pacific. While the RAP on WPS (2012 – 2015) is now outdated, the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) works to develop a Guidance Note on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) that builds on the [Revitalised Pacific Leader Gender Equality Declaration](#) in order to strengthen the integration of gender-sensitivity in peace and security action across the region. Finally, the [Communique of the Pacific Islands Forum \(PIF\)’s Leaders Meeting of 30 August 2024](#) highlights the increasing regional focus on the ‘peace’ element of the ‘peace and security’ efforts and requests the PIF Secretariat to develop a draft Ocean of Peace Declaration ahead of the 54th PIF’s Leaders Meeting in 2025.

In order to ensure that the existing regional policy frameworks adequately support sustaining peace, regional policies should incorporate the following considerations:

- *The Ocean of Peace Declaration should be developed in close partnership between the PIF Secretariat, PIF’s Leaders and local peacebuilding networks, especially those led by women and youth:* As the Pacific policy frameworks focus on human security, the implementation efforts also focus largely on ‘security’, with the police and military being involved in disaster risk reduction and community mediation. In many instances, this approach has been known to exacerbate grievances and further contribute to social dissolution. The draft of the Ocean of Peace Declaration is an opportunity for the PIF Secretariat to develop a framework, tools and mechanisms for the Pacific governments to advance the ‘peace’ element of their ‘peace and security’ action. In the drafting of the Blue Pacific Strategy, the references to peace were

¹ The 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (2025 PBAR) consultation on regional peacebuilding architecture builds on the findings of the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (2020 PBAR) consultation on gender, climate and sustaining peace in Pacific: https://www.gppac.net/files/2020-07/2020_PBAR%20Gender_Climate_Sustaining%20Peace_Outcome%20Document.pdf. Many recommendations from the 2020 PBAR remain relevant for the consideration by regional peacebuilding stakeholders.

integrated at the last moment due to the advocacy efforts of local peacebuilders. Similarly, the references to 'peace' are not prominent in the regional and national policies. Only 4 Constitutions of the Pacific governments mention the word 'peace' in passing. There are no peace policies or national prevention strategies in the region, while during the recent 2024 Pacific Regional and National Security Conference, Member States have committed to explore the development of national security strategies. This signals the lack of practical understanding by the governments in the region about what it means to advance peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The request to further *unpack the 'Ocean of Peace' concept in a political declaration creates the space for the PIF Secretariat to work with women and youth-led peacebuilding networks to clarify what regional and national peace policies could look like and what tools and mechanisms are required to implement them.*

- *Regional learning and exchange could support Member States' capacities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.* When it comes to the regional peacebuilding architecture, the government representatives have little awareness of what is happening in another country rather than their own. In this sense, the PIF Secretariat can work with civil society to create spaces for dialogue and exchange among governments on the implementation of regional policy frameworks.

Recommendations:

- Globally, the outcome document of the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (2025PBAR) could outline what national ownership in peacebuilding and sustaining peace looks like, drawing on the experiences in the Pacific, as well as national peacebuilding architecture reviews conducted to date. Such a global process could then inform the draft Ocean of Peace Declaration by the PIF Secretariat.
- Regionally, in line with the Peace and Security pillar of the Blue Pacific Strategy, the PIF Forum should (1) rebrand the Forum Regional Sub Committee on Security to become the Forum Regional Peace and Security Committee (2) ensure the Sub Committee works with civil society and relevant peacebuilding stakeholders to create an annual pre- and post-Forum Leaders' Dialogue, (3) appoint a peacebuilding expert within the Political Division of the PIF, (4) collect technical advice from regional networks of local peacebuilders, including women and youth, for the development of the WPS Guidance Note and the draft Ocean of Peace Declaration, and (5) develop the Youth, Peace and Security Guidance Note or Action Plan in the process of co-creation with youth leaders from peacebuilding networks in the Pacific.

Systematic and institutionalised engagement with local peacebuilding networks in the Pacific provides a strong foundation for sustaining peace.

The Pacific peacebuilding experts within local peacebuilding networks have been in the lead of the community mediation, promoting peace education and peacebuilding methodologies across all activities across the Triple Nexus. For example, the January 2024 violence in Papua New Guinea was quickly contained largely due to the efforts of local peacebuilders. Over years, peacebuilding experts came together in networks and coalitions (i.e., GPPAC Network in the Pacific (GPPAC Pacific) and the Pacific Women Mediators Networks (PWMN) to provide comprehensive expertise and conflict analysis to the governments and regional organisations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace matters. Specifically, such networks can 1) bring impartiality in the processes across the Triple Nexus, 2) build trust between diverse stakeholders, 3) establish open communication channels with diverse parties, and 4) pinpoint new context-specific problems and contribute to effective early warning measures.

Governments in the Pacific, including through the PIF, engage diverse actors through 'talanoa' (dialogue) and consultative processes in defining their regional peace and security priorities. Local peacebuilders were able to ensure that the references to 'peace' are included in the Blue Pacific Strategy, as well as in the [Communique of the Pacific Islands Forum \(PIF\)'s Forum Leaders Meeting of 30 August 2024](#), because they had access to the spaces of negotiation. There are some modalities within the region that could serve to guide the governments and the PIF towards a more systematised and institutionalised engagement with local peacebuilders to enable them to inform the development of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region (i.e., [the WPS Coordinating Committee in Fiji](#)). The UN similarly works to build the CS-UN Reference Group in line with [the UN System-Wide Community Engagement Guidelines](#).

However, the engagements of governments and regional organisations with local peacebuilding networks have largely been ad-hoc and largely depend on the opportunities presented rather than on institutionalised and systematic engagement. Further, in many meetings local peacebuilders are simply excluded from the substantive meetings, resorting to the discussions on the sidelines of the major forums. For example, the 2024 FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security did not see a formal engagement with any civil society.

Further, considering that peacebuilding is not a project but generational work, the governments should invest in building national capacities for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The PWMN has a quota of 20% reserved for young women to build their capacities as mediators. This example should appoint young representatives within regional organisations, government entities and other peacebuilding networks. This would help build peace constituencies locally, which are often lost as a result of economic migration of young people to New Zealand and Australia.

Recommendations:

- Regional organisations and national governments should develop consistent, sustained, transparent and risk-informed modalities of systematic and institutionalised engagement of local peacebuilding networks, especially those led by women and youth, and those based in the most remote areas. Some good practices and guidance can be drawn from [the WPS Coordinating Committee in Fiji](#) and [the UN System-Wide Community Engagement Guidelines](#).
- Regional organisations and national governments should also invest in multi-stakeholder consultation processes and prioritise the engagement with local women and youth-led peacebuilding networks in such processes. Building on and strengthening the engagement with Pacific Islands' peacebuilding experts, there is an opportunity for an equitable consultative platform in line with the PIF's decision-making processes. This could include the inclusion of briefings to the FSRS and FOC during substantive meetings, as well as an enhanced annual Forum Leaders' Dialogue with Civil Society as representatives of the diverse Pacific Island communities supported by pre- and post-Forum Leaders' Meeting CSO Forum.
- The UN Regional Office should finish the creation of the CS-UN Reference Group to systematise the engagement from conflict assessment, programme planning, implementation, and evaluation of all actions across the Triple Nexus.
- National governments should appoint young representatives within regional organisations and government entities.

Financial resources need to be reallocated from the security sphere to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In line with the 2022 UN General Assembly resolution on financing for peacebuilding ([A/RES/76/305](#)), Member States are expected to accelerate their financial support for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The spirit of the resolution is that both the donor community and national governments themselves will ensure an increased and more inclusive approach to financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. However, the trends in the Pacific require a more detailed analysis. The participants noted the following emerging considerations:

- *No data on financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace:* The financial allocations towards security are gradually increasing in the Pacific, which is reflective of the global trends. However, there is no data available to date on the financial allocations towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
- *Projectisation of peacebuilding damages the sustainability of results:* Most resources available to civil society are for short-term projects with a specific set of expected outcomes. At the same time, the availability and quality of financing for local peacebuilders are essential to sustaining peace at all levels. The donor community could prioritise longer-term core funding to local peacebuilding organisations.
- *Local peacebuilders need to be compensated for sharing their knowledge and expertise:* The participation and engagement of local peacebuilders with the UN and the PIF often are expected to be funded by local peacebuilders themselves. This does not allow local peacebuilders to adequately prepare and collect information from their constituencies. Covering the costs of travel to regional meetings is not sufficient to ensure proper preparations.

Recommendations:

- The donor community, as well as national governments should increase the percentage of peacebuilding funding, with a dedicated peacebuilding marker.
- The donor community could prioritise longer-term core funding to local peacebuilding organisations.
- The UN and regional organisations should provide financial support, including the participation of local peacebuilders in talanoa, as well as the preparation for these meetings.

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), among other regional organisations, has great potential to scale up sustaining peace in the region.

In addition to the regional policy frameworks developed under the PIF umbrella, the PIF's mandate allows for various mechanisms to practically and substantially contribute to peacebuilding and sustaining peace across the region. These include but are not limited to:

- The PIF can authorise regional assistance missions (i.e., [Solomon Islands](#)).
- The PIF Chair can establish a civil society advisory panel on peace and security.
- The PIF Chair can issue statements to encourage the focus on inclusive peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region, as well as in specific contexts.
- The Ministerial Action Group for the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers can endorse protocols for responding to early signs of instability (i.e., [the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 \(PHP-C\)](#)).
- The PIF's Secretary General can establish 'fact finding or similar missions' to address crises (i.e., [Nauru](#)).
- The PIF's Leaders can endorse and support mediation missions (i.e., [the 2024 mission to New Caledonia](#)).

Beyond the PIF, there are other regional organisations that can support peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region. For example, the situation in West Papua is better addressed through the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), as West Papua is a member of the MSG and not of the PIF. To the same extent, ASEAN's support can be utilised to support peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region.

All regional organisations should timely receive information on root causes of instability across the region to ensure proper prevention action. Currently, Common Country Analyses (CCAs) are being conducted by the UN Regional Office; however, access to immediate changes in the situation at the community level is missing. To ensure that regional organisations receive timely information on root causes of instability, a comprehensive early warning and early response system could be established in the region.

Recommendations:

- Regional organisations across the Pacific should clearly outline their mandate regarding peacebuilding and sustaining peace and take measures to strengthen the implementation of these mandates in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace across the region.
- To support regional organisations' capacities for sustaining peace, the Pacific Forum Leaders should establish a civil society advisory panel on peace and security and mandate a multistakeholder working group to develop a comprehensive early warning and early response system that provides regular context analysis could be established in the region.

² Note that this is not a comprehensive overview of the PIF's mandate in regards to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We encourage further research to provide a more comprehensive overview.

The Pacific

Peacebuilding Architecture



Regional Policies

The Boe Declaration and its Action Plan;
The Pacific Blue Strategy 2050;
The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)
The Revitalised Pacific Leader Gender Equality Declaration
The WPS Guidance Note (upcoming)
The Ocean of Peace Declaration (upcoming)
~~The Youth, Peace and Security Guidance Note/Action Plan~~



Regional Organisations

Pacific Island Forum (PIF)
Malenian Spearhead Group (MSG)
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
The Pacific Community (SPC)



National Policies

Constitutional references to peace
Peace policies
National prevention strategies
Early warning and early response systems



Local Peacebuilding Initiatives

GPPAC Pacific
Pacific Women Mediators Network (PWMN)
Shifting the Power Coalition