

# Executive Summary

## The imperative of a troubling era

More than 50 active conflicts raged worldwide in 2021, while almost half of the conflicts since 1989 have recurred. Protracted crises persist for a decade or more with no resolution. International governance and co-operation are challenged by political violence and polarisation, inter- and intrastate conflict, proxy and hybrid wars, threats from climate change, and large-scale violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

Working towards peaceful states and societies in the geopolitical context and political realities of the 21st century is challenging. Peacemakers face difficult trade-offs, complex power dynamics and entrenched interests. The past 30 years have seen significant efforts to build peaceful states and societies and inclusive economies. Despite some noteworthy successes, peacemaking is also prone to fail on its own terms when it is not broadly legitimate, sufficiently inclusive, or consciously transformative.

Meeting the global peace and security challenges of this era calls for new forms of engagement and partnerships among all participants in peacemaking processes. We must recalibrate the way we practise peacemaking – both the principles that govern peacemaking and their practical implementation.

## Charting a path for lasting peace - A covenant for peacemaking

The Peacemaking Covenant is a common compass around which all peacemaking actors can come together to catalyse a new way of working and build a more peaceful future. It lays out the necessary shifts in the approach(es) to peacemaking, the philosophical foundation underpinning these shifts, and the principles that accompany it.

The Covenant emerged from two years of deliberations and sustained engagements by the International Commission on Inclusive Peace and a global alliance of partners with grass roots and high level voices and inputs, anchored in a solid base of knowledge, evidence and cumulative learning, reflecting practical and lived experience, pragmatism and political feasibility.

The Covenant deliberately echoes the international community's commitment to a rights and justice based order reflected in the International Covenants on Civil and Political, and Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, as well as to international humanitarian law and international agreements that commit to building a peaceful and secure global order.

*Engagement with the Covenant will involve a public commitment to upholding its core principles and establishing enduring partnerships to build sustainable peace and security. Adherence to the Covenant's principles represents a practical pledge to be accountable for acting in good faith as a peacemaker.*

The Peacemaking Covenant and its principles will catalyse practical, long-term and equitable partnerships. They orient peacemaking efforts towards the co-creation of sustainable solutions by actors operating at international, national and local levels and with different time frames.

*The Covenant advocates four key shifts in policy and practice:*

- how peacemaking is conceived: from a primary focus on diplomacy and negotiated settlements to end violence, to approaching peacemaking as a longer-term process that requires broader inclusivity, adaptability and sustained engagement to build legitimacy
- how local and international actors work together: embracing a partnership compact that supports the co-creation of locally led solutions based on relationships of respect, reciprocity and humility
- how peacemaking is implemented: working beyond elite pacts and power-sharing agreements to transform state-society relations through inclusive governance and political institutions that are accountable to society
- how social groups interact: from “inclusion as representation” towards genuinely pluralist political discourses, outcomes, and social relations based on respect for diversity in political, social and economic life.

## The Principles for Peace

Eight core principles are embodied in the Peacemaking Covenant to inform the difficult choices, trade-offs and decisions of peacemakers. Dignity, solidarity and humility provide an ethical compass to build trust and guide relationships of consultation, representation and respect between international, transnational, national, sub-national, business and civil society actors. Enhancing legitimacy and accountable security provide an overarching objective, and the foundation for inclusive and lasting peace. The remaining three principles underpin the Covenant in a practically oriented partnership compact with commitments to promoting pluralism, adopting subsidiarity, and embracing integrated and hybrid solutions for all actors in the peacemaking space

The Principles for Peace reflect the belief that practical actions and concrete peacemaking programmes must embrace a comprehensive and ethical vision, while recognising the serious challenges and obstacles to building sustainable and secure peace in a variety of geopolitical contexts.

These principles are an integrated whole that captures the comprehensive shift in philosophy embodied in the Covenant. While not every principle is equally relevant in every circumstance, they reinforce each other and are not hierarchically organised.

## The way forward

The Peacemaking Covenant and its Principles for Peace provide an overarching framework for action. The policies and practices that follow from these principles are not a “one size fits all” prescription. They shall be tailored and applied to specific contexts and anchored within the norms and frameworks of different communities. The latter include mediators and negotiators, security forces, national authorities, international actors and donors, civil society and business actors, working in partnership to improve decision making and influence policy, practice and financing.

The launch of the Peacemaking Covenant is accompanied with the establishment of a follow-on and implementation mechanism – the Principles for Peace Foundation – to catalyse global, regional and local efforts to build support and buy-in, as well as to institutionalise, monitor and track the principles and the quality of peace processes.

The Peacemaking Covenant is a living initiative – not a report to gather dust. The Principles for Peace Foundation will serve as a catalyst and custodian of the Covenant, its principles, and the partnerships around it. The ultimate success of the Covenant will depend on renewed commitment, anchoring in the international system and continuous engagement to chart a path to lasting peace.

