Facts about peacebuilding

More than **50%** of the **135 million people** who are acutely food-insecure in the world live in countries where conflict is the leading driver of hunger.

**80 million** people around the world were forcibly displaced by conflict in 2020.

**33%** of U.S. foreign aid goes, not to humanitarian, development or local peacekeeping, but to military and security efforts.

For the wellbeing and flourishing of people around the world, we want peace. But peacebuilding is more than just the prevention of violence.

Peacebuilding . . .

- Responds to the root causes and effects of conflict
- Addresses basic needs and rights equitably
- Builds right relationships through practices such as mediation, restorative justice, reconciliation and trauma healing
- Responds in situations where there are unjust relationships and structures
- Listens to the voices of the marginalized to advocate for just systems
- Respects and promotes diversity
- Restores the health of Creation and promotes sustainable living
- Enhances local knowledge and practices that support justice and peace

“Americans believe we’re more polarized than we really are—and that misperception can drive us even further apart.”

—From *America’s divided mind*, beyondconflict.org


**Every $1 invested in peace saves the world $16 on the costs of conflict**
# Key Principles for U.S. Policies on Peacebuilding

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Peacebuilding is integral to relief and development</th>
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<td>Economic insecurity, structural violence and conflict create barriers for relief and development. An entrepreneur in El Salvador or Honduras may not be able to expand her business because of violent extortion from gangs. A family in Iran or Syria may struggle to access health care because of sanctions and war. When sustainable development programs are intentionally woven with principles of peacebuilding, sustainable peace is an outcome. <strong>U.S. foreign assistance should generously support peacebuilding projects that address violence and conflict at the root of hunger, displacement and public health crises.</strong> This includes robust support for the Complex Crisis Fund (CCF) to prevent and respond to the early warning signs of violence and escalating conflicts.</td>
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<th>Local peacebuilders are essential for lasting peace</th>
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<td>True peace cannot be achieved through military force but can only be found by addressing the factors—including structural injustices—that lead to violence. Churches and local civil society organizations demonstrate effective, nonviolent, community-based responses to conflict. Such local, context-specific responses prevent violence while strengthening communities. Investing in peace education is essential. For example, Emergency Preparedness Response Teams (EPRT), an MCC partner in Nigeria, uses nonviolent peace education to build trust among Christian and Muslim communities and reduce the triggers of conflict and violence. <strong>Funding for peacebuilding efforts should support local civil society organizations, not military forces.</strong> U.S. government policies should include strong calls for the protection of peace and human rights activists leading this work.</td>
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<th>Peace requires engagement with all stakeholders</th>
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<td>Diplomacy and engagement are peaceful and effective alternatives to war. Understanding occurs when all parties listen to each other and see each other as human beings. <strong>U.S. government policies should support avenues for constructive dialogue, such as people-to-people engagement, and lift broad-based sanctions and travel restrictions that isolate other countries.</strong></td>
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<th>Peace means reducing gun violence</th>
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<td>In the U.S., polling shows broad public support for expanding background checks as one tool for reducing gun violence in our communities. <strong>Background checks should be required for all gun sales,</strong> including private, online and gun show sales. <strong>Sales of U.S. guns and other weapons are also fueling violence in other countries</strong>—more restrictions should be put on these sales.</td>
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**Learn more**

- Peaceful practices: A guide to healthy communication in conflict *(coming soon)* [mcc.org/peaceful-practices](http://mcc.org/peaceful-practices)
- Voices from the global church
  - votervoice.net/MennoniteCC/BlogPosts/2006
- Mennonites against militarism
  - pjsn.org/mennonites-against-militarism
- A loaded conversation: An invitation to talk about guns
  - mcc.org/media/resources/8279
- Pursuing peace: The essence of Mennonite Central Committee
  - mcccanada.org, commonword.ca, amazon.com