COST OF CONFLICTS IN GEORGIA AND OBSTACLES TO ITS DEVELOPMENT

Medea Turashvili[1]

"The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent."

George Orwell, 1984

I. INTRODUCTION

Georgia was plagued by conflicts and instability after independence. In the early 1990s, the country suffered two bloody secessionist wars, both of which were lost by the central government. These conflicts produced two zones of unresolved conflict in the form of two unrecognized entities, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that together constitute nearly fifteen per cent of the country's territory. Since then, there were constant skirmishes in both conflict zones, which culminated in August 2008 with the direct military confrontation of the Georgian and Russian regular armies.

When discussing conflicts in Georgia, two important components should be taken into account: the wars of the 1990s in South Ossetia and Abkhazia were a combination and in fact a logical culmination of distrust between the leadership of the central government and various ethnic groups living in independent Georgia, the inexperience of the central and local ruling elite to handle ethnic diversity and manage crises and the non-existence of democratic institutions that would have enabled opposing groups to resolve their differences through non-violent means. Secondly, Russia played an important role in sustaining the status quo of frozen conflicts and retaining leverage to escalate the situation, as was the case in 2008. Arguably, the 2008 Georgian-Russian war did not really change the two-dimensional nature of the conflicts; it merely elevated the degree of Russian influence and involvement in the Georgian conflicts which in turn, overshadowed their ethnic component.[2]

Some conflicts can be characterized as zero-sum or win-win games, but, there are conflicts where both parties are going to lose and it is just a matter of question who is going to fare worse. Georgian conflicts fall in the latter category. This article will illustrate the cost that Georgian, South Ossetian, as well as Abkhazian societies incur due to unresolved conflict of 25 years, and will analyze the lost resources and potential for progress and development. This analysis aims at helping to understand the missed opportunities, but also suggests reverse scenarios which could develop with normalization and peace.

---

1 Medea Turashvili is the senior adviser of the Public Defender of Georgia on human rights issues in conflict affected regions. Viewpoints expressed in this article are her sole responsibility and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Public Defender of Georgia.

2 Medea Turashvili "Georgia' Conflict Resolution Endeavours and Lessons Learned" in *Ukraine's Strategy for Building Relations with the Population of Crimea and Donbass. Lessons Learnt from Georgia for Ukraine,* Institute of World Policy and Caucasian House, 2015,available at http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/1544.html

II. ARE THERE WINNERS OF THE CONFLICTS?

All agree that conflicts have negative consequences, however, conflicts also could offer some benefits for certain societies and individuals. These benefits are often calculated in monetary terms, however, the importance of conflicts in shaping the societies should not be underestimated.

Conflicts help in identity construction and nation-building, because conflicts construct group boundaries by helping individuals recognize their common interest and threats, conflicts maintain group cohesion against an "enemy" and unify societies for a common cause. Once the concept of 'otherness' has become established, then terms like the enemy, foreigner, ethnicity, nationality, etc. start to perpetuate and divide people on different identity lines.[3] As one scholar puts it "The products of the wars of Soviet succession are not frozen conflicts but are, rather, relatively successful examples of making states by making war."[4]

In this sense, conflicts and wars can be functional and instrumental. "Elites foment ethnic violence to build political support; this process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favors more violence".[5] "By actively provoking and creating violent incidents, leadership constructs an image of overwhelming threat to the group from the outside and of themselves as saviors of the ethnic nation."[6]

Conflicts in Georgia have definitely contributed to the identity formation of Georgians, Ossetians and Abkhazians and have pitted them against each other as mutually exclusive phenomena. Any ethnic Georgian and Ossetian living in Shida Kartli region of Georgia will tell you that they could never tell each other apart in their daily life before the wars in the 1990s. But, during the course of the war, they started to become self-conscious of their ethnicity and form group boundaries on an ethnic basis. Ethnicity became so much cemented in the minds of people that it even became grounds for attacks, discrimination, hatred, etc. Violent incidents further reaffirmed "the Georgianess", "Ossetianess", "Abkhazianess", their "uniqness", "antiquity", "supremacy", etc. In short, conflicts and armed struggles in the early 1990s did bring ethnic "awakening" of Georgians, Ossetians and Abkhazians. It helped them in the nation-building projects based on ethnicity.

Political elites played an important role in this process. The Georgian Nationalist movement of early 1990s and its leadership often focused on "Georgian antiquity", "guests on our soil", "Islamization" or "Tatarization" of Georgia.[7]. These discourses were also counter-combated by discourses from Ossetian and Abkhaz leaders with "enemy against us", "Georgian imperialism", "Georgian fascism", "survival of our nation", "independence as a guarantee for ethnic survival" etc.[8] Eventually, ruling elites both in the centre and autonomous entities actually benefited from these conflicts. Many military leaders turned into politicians after the war and many of them now are national heroes in their respective societies.

---

3 Vivien, Jabri. (1996) Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

4 Charles King, (2001) The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States, World Politics, Volume 53, Number 4.

5 James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin (2000) Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity, International Organization, Volume 54, Issue 04.

6 Jolle, Demmers. (2012) Theories of Violent Conflict: an introduction. London: Routledge.

7 Nodia, Gia (1996) "Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia" in Coppieters Bruno (ed.) Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Vub Brussels University Press; Cornell, Svante. (2002) Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia. Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Report No. 61. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

8 Kaufmann, Stuart J. (2001) Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

III. COST OF THE CONFLICT

A. Humanitarian aspects and social fabric

Naturally, conflicts have more costs than benefits and a conflict does not simply end with the number of victims killed or injured. Rather, conflicts have lasting effects on societies, including and not limited to war traumas, migration and forced displacement, social difficulties, radicalization, limited freedoms and civic liberties, etc.

Together, various waves of conflicts in Georgia cost around 20,000 lives[9] and more than 260,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), [10] some 20,000 refugees[11] and other forcibly displaced who have not acquired any official status, as well as great material destruction, and economic hardships, which further contributed to the ongoing political instability.

The Georgian, South Ossetian and Abkhazian societies are still haunted by the consequences of those conflicts. Figures of migration, which are both direct and indirect results of the conflict, are shocking:

- The population of Georgia, excluding resident of South Ossetia and Abkhazia has declined from 4,789,226 to 3,729,635 in 1989-2014: 14 % decrease;
- The population of South Ossetia has declined from 86,454 to estimated 20,000-30,000 in 1989-201012: roughly 65-77 percent decrease;
- The population of Abkhazia has declined from 525, 061 to 240,705 in 1989-2011: 54% percent decrease.

This decline can be assessed as a demographic catastrophe for all societies. Socio-economic hardship and a lack of development opportunities immediately after the wars in 1990s led many to relocate abroad. This process naturally means a brain drain, brain waste and the loss of human capital. Studies show that migrants from Georgia have a high level of education and professional qualification. The share of university degree holders is up to 55%, however, most of these college graduates are employed in positions that do not require university qualifications or are irrelevant to their areas of specialization. Furthermore, most emigrants (between 70% and 80% according to different surveys) are in the ideal working age bracket, namely, 20 to 50 years. [13] Undoubtedly, this is a great loss for the development of Georgian society.

Conflicts and ethnic nationalism also adversely affected the ethnic make-up of Georgian, South Ossetian and Abkhazian societies. Georgia witnessed significant out-migration of ethnic minorities, as a result of which the number of ethnic minorities living in Georgia has decreased from 30% of 1989 to 17% of 2002.[14] The same is true for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where the change of the ethnic mosaic happened largely with the ethnic Georgian population who were expelled during the war. According to 1989 census, the total

9 Human Rights Watch 1995 report estimates the death toll as 10 000-15 000 for the conflict in Abkhazia. Around 1000 casualties are estimated in South Ossetia in 1991-1992 and some 1000 more in 2008. Human Rights Watch (1995) Georgia Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict, Human Rights Watch Arms Project, March, Vol. 7, No. 7. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/g/georgia/georgia953.pdf [accessed 12 January 2016].

10 262 186 is registered as IDPs in Georgia in 2014. Special Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on Human Rights Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, 2014. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzKRMBDU8J3dSWhHWlRRUDNqUGs/view [accessed 12 January 2016]; But this figure does not include the population who migrated to other countries and their number remains unknown.

11 By December 2004 their numbers and those of forced migrants from Georgia registered in North Ossetia were 19,025. International Crisis Group (2005) Georgia-South Ossetia: Refugee Return the Path to Peace, Europe Briefing N°38.

12 International Crisis Group (2010) South Ossetia: The Burden of Recognition, Europe Report N°205.

13 European Training Foundation (2013) M*igration and Skills in Armenia and Georgia: Comperative Report*. Available at: http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/226927FBAE4DA4E2C1257B4D0043A93E/$file/Migration&skills_Georgia.pdf [accessed 12 January 2016]; Caucasus Research Resource Centres- Georgia (2008) *Migration and Return in Georgia: Trends, Assessments, and Potential.* Available at: http://www.crrc.ge/uploads/files/research_projects/CRRC_MigrationReport_FINAL_23JAN2008.pdf [accessed 12 January 2016].

14 Detailed analysis of 2014 census is not yet available, but it is highly likely that the number of ethnic minorities has further decreased.

population of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic was comprised of 45.7 per cent ethnic Georgians, 17.8 per cent ethnic Abkhazians, and the rest of the population was Russians, Greeks, Armenians, etc. A 2011 Abkhazian census showed that Abkhazians constitute 50.71% of current population of the entity, Georgians 17.93%, Armenians 17.39%, and Russians 9.17%.[15] The total population of the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast (region) was comprised of 66 per cent Ossetians and 29 per cent Georgians according to 1989 census. Today, no more than 2,500 ethnic Georgians remain in South Ossetia, mostly in the Akhalgori district[16], which is approximately 8-12%.

> *"My daughter and grandchildren are now in Tskhinvali. The more time passes, the more you realize the loss. I'm not talking about the economic and material losses. I worry about my land, about my region. I don't remember my house anymore. I suffer the most from the fact that the closest people became so distant and inaccessible. This soul pain is a heavy injury. It should not be like this! The mother should have right to visit her daughter freely, and the daughter should have the right to see her brothers and relatives. And I am not the only one. Many experience a similar pain and suffering. Many leftparents on the other side, or vice versa. So many people live with such pain. How can I not say that my rights are violated, if I cannot see mydaughter.It has been nine years that I have not seen my grandchildren. Is this not a violation of human rights?..."*
>
> *IDP settlement resident in the village of Karaleti*

The figures illustrate that the social fabrics of these societies have been heavily affected. As noted above, South Ossetia and Abkhazia have lost significant parts of their ethnic Georgian communities, resulting in the disruption of family and relative links, especially in South Ossetia, where an estimated 40% of the population were mixed families. This means that many traditions of inter-ethnic co-existence, and community events, which were a way of life, were also uprooted. Neighbors no longer spend time together, marriages fall apart, and friendships break down.

Displacement forced people to change jobs, residence, and leisure activities and adopt new and dangerous survival strategies. For IDPs, the tradition of celebrated religious holidays has changed. They are no longer able to visit graveyards of family members and honor them on Easter for example, a tradition which provides Georgians with a link to the family and the past. The cycle of detentions on the South Ossetian ABL shows that the rate of detention actually increases during religious holidays, because people try to cross it regardless of increased Russian scrutiny.[17]

The weakening of social ties and restricted interactions provoke feelings of fear and mistrust among Georgians, South Ossetians and Abkhazians. These feelings manifest themselves in people's behavior and attitudes towards each other, especially in areas where they live in close proximity to each other. The social fabric of the population of both sides of the division line has been weakened by suspicions and resentment towards individuals or families suspected of having supported the armed groups or "participated in the war efforts." According to a story of an elderly villager from Zardiaantkari, Gori municipality, his house was torched by South Ossetians he knew from neighboring village, because they believe he led the Georgian army to the conflict zone in 2008.[18]

B. Human dignity, human rights and Democracy

The high numbers of victims, feelings of insecurity and distrust, as well as ethnic antagonism during and after the armed conflicts, all promote intolerance, radicalism and increase the risks of authoritarianism

---

15 The population of Abkhazia stands at 240,705, AbkhazWorld, 29 December 2011. Available at:
   http://abkhazworld.com/aw/current-affairs/534-the-population-of-abkhazia-stands-at-240705#sthash.L5taTsfT.dpuf [accessed 12 January 2016].

16 International Crisis Group (2010) South Ossetia: The Burden of Recognition, Europe Report N°205.

17 Ibid.

18 Author interview in Shida Kartli 2015.

and corruption. In fragile situations of conflict and post conflict, democracy is the main victim. This is due to by various actors who make rational calculations aimed at increasing their legitimacy and support base. Military or political leaders can successfully use the situation to legitimize violence and their power, for example, portraying the whole nation as enemy or identifying 'we vs. they', by associating 'our' side with the survival and well being of all "our" people, while stressing that the "other" party is an "existential threat".[19] Combating these threats naturally requires special measures, which can be ignorance of laws, justification of violence and human rights violations.[20] An image of overwhelming threat to the "ethnic collective" is particularly helpful in silencing dissent, especially if dissenters can be branded as traitors.[21] Collective fear of the "other" can explain people's submissiveness, so people comply with authoritarian rules that are imposed on them and tolerate violence and human rights violations.

Democratization was always a declared policy of the Georgian government, but as soon as the ruling elites felt a decrease in popularity, they would usually refer to external threats to mobilize the support base and justify their undemocratic rule. After the November 2007 protests in the Georgian capital, which were the first major anti-government street demonstration after the Rose Revolution, ruling elites reacted by claiming a Russian conspiracy and claiming that "dark forces" were responsible. According to a scholar, "the specter of Russia had become a lifeline for President Saakashvili when his political fortunes were down".[22]

In addition, the rise of foreign security threats was usually coupled with the deterioration of the human rights situation in Georgia. This became especially evident in the aftermath of the 2008 war, when government and ruling party representatives often argued that it was difficult to protect human rights "when the enemy is 40 kilometers from the capital."

This tendency is articulated even more in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, where Georgians as a nation and the Georgian state is portrayed as an existential threat to the "ethnic survival" of a "small nation." And, in this situation any dissent or critical opinion is interpreted as "betrayal" while Georgians are demonized. No wonder, intolerance, discrimination, curbing of personal freedoms and civil liberties have become a normal practice in these entities. The absence of international scrutiny over the human rights situation in these entities strengthen the non-democratic rule, leaving the political or civil activists in isolation.

> *"... Twice because of my cow I went there and was caught by Russians. The third time I was caught when my friend died, an Ossetian, on the other side. I went to the wake ceremony, and then decided to attend the funeral the next day. After all, it was my friend who passed away. I took money both for the funeral reception and also for those who were going to detain and jail me, so that I could pay the fine just in case…and so I was caught when going to the funeral. Here where pine trees are growing - I was caught there. I said I was going to the funeral. First, they did not believe me, then they believed me, but still detained me. I said that I have money and can pay, so let's speed up the trial so that I can make it to the funeral. I was taken to the investigator. Then I was taken to Djava. I was fined two thousand rubles and they wanted to send me back home. But, I had to be at the funeral and not home – this is why I came here. They told me that it is not possible. Their president Tibilov was present at the funeral at that time. My friend's children told him that their father's friend, an old man that was coming from here to the funeral, was caught. When he learned it, he called. And I was taken in his car to the house of my late friend. So, I made it to the funeral. After the funeral, I stayed another half an hour for the funeral reception. Then, again in their car, I was taken back…That's it. I won't go there anymore, enough…."*
>
> *Resident of the village of Chvirnisi, Kvareli municipality*

---

19 Schröder, Ingo W. and Bettina Schmidt. (2001) "Introduction: Violent Imaginaries and Violent Practices" in Schröder, Ingo W. and Bettina Schmidt (eds.) Anthropology of Violence and Conflict, London and New York: Routledge.

20 Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

21 V.P. Gagnon, Jn, (1994) Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: Case of Serbia, International Security, Volume 19, Issue 3.

22 Scott Radnitz (2012) The Politics of Foreign Intrigue in the Caucasus, PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 243.

One Tskhinvali based interlocutor explained about the situation in South Ossetia: "There is dominant thinking among the population here that they should follow whatever the government says, and that any dissenting opinion is directed against the state. Accordingly, there are virtually no people with dissenting opinions. If there are any, they are silent, hoping that the shadow of the conflict will wither away and dissenting opinions will no longer be perceived as harmful to the state".[23]

Silencing independent media and civil activists who speak out about problems within societies is another strategy to justify undemocratic rule in conflict and post-conflict settings. South Ossetian and Abkhazian activists and independent journalist are constantly presented as traitors, or even foreign agents whose main aim is to undermine the fragile status quo of de facto independence.[24] According to an influential human rights organization, in South Ossetia and Abkhazia "people cannot speak freely or associate to stand up for their rights, especially where even the most legitimate criticism of the authorities is presented as treachery."[25]

This policy has ensured that those who wish to organize peace groups or peace movements are under constant threat and are incapable of effecting social or political change. Accordingly, peace movement has not become large a influential in Georgian, South Ossetian, or Abkhazian societies.

In short, conflicts can be said to be the main cause of the lack of democracy, the denial of human rights and suppression of different opinions. An International Federation for Human Rights report finds that in all conflict torn entities of the former Soviet Union (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Crimea, and Transnistria) very basic rights of inhabitants are denied, in the situation when "national mechanisms are unavailable because de jure authorities have little if any leverage over de facto authorities. A lack of rule of law and high levels of corruption render local laws and courts in the disputed entities largely ineffective… Ombudsman Offices …are not independent and are highly politicized; citizens have little legal awareness and are therefore ill-equipped to demand their rights."[26] This tendency should definitely be seen within the context of unresolved conflicts.

C. Human Development

Conflicts and armed violence disrupts markets, and destroys social infrastructure. In the midst of undemocratic, unaccountable governance these become difficult to recover, not only due to lack of finances and conflict's negative effect on economy, but also due to corruption and the self-interest of officials.

There can be various explanations as to why conflict affected societies are more prone to corruption: weak civil society, including media which cannot keep the government accounted, lack of trust in government institutions also creates a situation when individuals seek to use their access to public office to accommodate their own needs; Many in power might also have little incentive to give up the power and profit they have secured during the hostilities; Breakdown of the rule of law tend to result in enhanced opportunities for the flourishing of corrupt practices.[27] Accordingly, problems such as poverty, social inequality, low standard of living, lack of education, access to medical and social services become endemic problem during protracted, unresolved conflicts.

Conflicts had major consequences in all aspects of human development in Georgian, South Ossetian and Abkhazian societies, while the unresolved nature of the conflict has been sustaining the low level of human development. This has especially been negatively reflected on the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) and IDP communities. Although direct military activities stopped in 2008, local communities near

---

23 Author interview, 2015.

24 International Federation for Human Rights (2014) Assessing Human Rights Protection in Eastern European Conflict and Disputed Entities. Available at: https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_disputed_entities_uk-ld3.pdf [accessed on 12 January 2016].

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 The Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies (2006), Post Conflict Institution Building: Beating Corruption. Available at http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/Proceedings/csrs/2006/csrs_dec06.pdf [accessed on 13 January 2016].

the ABL continue to pay the highest price for unresolved conflict. The post-conflict recovery process has been prolonged due to the inability of the parties to agree on vital humanitarian issues, such as drinking and potable water supply, access to agriculture lands and pastures, freedom of movement across the ABL, etc. As a result, locals lost traditional sources of income in these areas: land cultivation and animal husbandry. According the 2014 Ombudsman report, some villages on the ABL with South Ossetia lost access to up to 50-60% of village lands as a result of borderization.[28]

The same is true for IDPs, who live with the trauma of war and displacement and experience socio-economic hardship, including low levels of employment, and problems with access to adequate housing, health care and quality education. [29] The situation for IDPs, especially for those displaced in the early 90s has now become a vicious circle. Decreased access to quality education leads to decreased employment opportunities. That, in turn, leads to poverty, poor health and decreased opportunities for quality education for children.

The situation is far worse in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, arguably not only due to destruction caused during the war, but also due to endemic corruption. For example, Russian aid to South Ossetia from the 2008 war to 2010, was $840 million, about $28,000 for each resident, but, residents complained of the slow pace of reconstruction, largely due to corruption.[30] Although no systematic study has been undertaken to review social problems in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it is a widely accepted fact that medical care, pre-school and school education is in a difficult state in both entities.

Indeed, the EU-Georgia Association Agreement as well as planned visa liberalization with Shengen states do provide better chances for human development in Georgia. In the long run, this would mean a decrease in poverty and the elimination of social inequality, better access to education and health care, freedom of movement, etc. However, it remains to be seen to what extent residents of South Ossetia or Abkhazia will use of this opportunity.

IV. CONCLUSION: ENDING THE VICIOUS CYCLE

The aim of this article was to show some aspects of development that Georgians, Abkhazians and South Ossetians missed due to unresolved conflicts, thus missing the opportunities for peace. The article intended to demonstrate that conflict that causes destruction, authoritarianism, human rights violations and underdevelopment also leads to conflicts and escalation. All have lost from the conflicts and more so from unresolved conflicts. South Ossetians and Abkhazians declared independence, without the majority of their pre-war population and rejoiced the Russian recognition, but, this has brought little improvement to lives and rights of local residents, while making them more and more dependent on Russia and isolated from the rest of the world.

Georgia's territorial integrity is violated. It has lost a vast part of its pre-war population, received a huge number of IDPs, and continues to face significant security challenges that often become grounds for the government to justify human rights violations and undemocratic rule. Although one might argue that

---

28 Special report of the Public Defender of Georgia 2014, Human Rights Situation of Conflict-affected Population in Georgia. Available at: http://ombudsman.ge/en/reports/specialuri-angarishebi/human-rights-situation-of-conflict-affected-population-in-georgia.page [accessed on 13 January 2016].

29 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Institute for Policy Studies (2012) Aging in Displacement: Assessing Health Status of Displaced Older Adults in the Republic of Georgia. Available at: http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-refugee-and-disaster-response/publications_tools/GEORGIA%20PRM%20OLDER%20ADULT%20STUDY%2001May2012.pdf [accessed on 13 January 2016]; Institute for Policy Studies, Association "Dea"(2014) Needs and Priorities of IDP and Conflict-affected Women and Girls available at: http://www2.unwomen.org/~/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2014/idp%20%20conflict-affected%20women_geo.pdf?v=1&d=20150410T195129 [accessed on 13 January 2016].

30 International Crisis Group (2010) *South Ossetia: The Burden of Recogniton,* Europe Report N°205.

the degree of democracy and human rights observance has increased since the change of government in Tbilisi in 2012, this achievement needs to be consolidated. Georgia continues to pay high financial cost for unresolved conflicts.

This is a vicious cycle that needs to be ended; miscalculations of the 1990s and 2008 should be changed with pragmatism. Structural reforms, in terms of democratization, protection of minorities and human rights, access to justice, rule of law and elimination of poverty are needed in order to prevent the escalation of tensions in the future and ensure stability and peaceful coexistence of various groups.

This is a difficult but very much needed task for the political leadership, as well as for civil society. They should be very conscious that discourses of exclusion polarize people on ethnic, class, race, color, religion or any other trait basis, thus they should employ discourses of inclusion that unite and bring people together around a common cause of peace and stability.

A fundamental change of attitude and political culture is required in all societies in order to achieve stability and peace between different groups. There will be no peace without democracy, because democracy is an instrument of peaceful negotiations, compromises, non-violent mechanisms of dispute resolution and respect to differences. Democracies are at a lower risk of civil war and other forms of violence. [31]

On the other hand, there will be no social, economic and political development without peace, because development and prosperity requires a peaceful environment for policy making and structural reforms that address human rights, human needs and human security. As one scholar noted "Peace is development in the broadest sense of the term".[32]

---

31 Several scholar show empirical evidence that ethnic or civil wars are indeed unlikely to occur in democratic societies and if a state has democratic neighbors, it is less likely to become embroiled in an internal ethnic conflict. See Havard Hegre and Martin Austvoll Nome (2010) Democracy, Development, and Armed Conflict, Paper presented to the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington DC. Available at: https://havardhegre.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/hegre_nome_apsa2010.pdf [accessed on 13 January 2016]. Sambanis, Nicholas (2001) Do Ethnic and Non-ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?, Journal of Conflict Resolution Volume 45, Issue 3.

32 Eduard Azar (1990). *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases*. Hampshire: Dartmouth; and J. Burton (1990). *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. London and New York: Macmillan and St Martin's Press.