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The Future of International Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in an era of global geopolitical tensions: addressing challenges for Peace Studies and for multilateral peacebuilding approaches

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Multilateral peacekeeping and peacebuilding is widely seen to be in crisis, in some sense. The increasing global geo-political tensions over the last 15 years have reduced the space for achieving sufficient agreement at the UN Security Council for effective UN peace mission mandates, or even amongst reasonably broad-based 'coalitions of the willing'. For many critics of UN or other multilateral peacebuilding strategies and missions since the late 1990s, this is not particularly worrying. In practice such peace missions have had many limitations and faults - maybe it would be better to allow local stakeholders within conflict affected countries to take the lead on peacebuilding efforts without potentially clumsy or misconceived international efforts to provide support?

This panel takes a different view: that the crisis in multilateral peacekeeping and peacebuilding doctrines and missions is of serious and urgent concern, raising questions of how to respond so that at least key elements can be salvaged and developed even in the context of substantial geo-political tensions. Although experience demonstrates that many of the determinants for successful peacebuilding are local; sustained and well-informed international support is normally a critical factor in enabling a sufficiently secure environment or adequate political space for local peacebuilders to mobilise and form the necessary coalitions for sustainable and effective peacebuilding.

Peace Studies researchers have long emphasised the importance of multilevel peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, combining community, mid-level and national peacebuilding with transnational and international support. The papers in this panel explore the extent to which Peace Studies' concepts and approaches to peacebuilding, as well as those of international peacebuilding practitioners, need to be revised or transformed in order to respond to the present crises in international peacebuilding policy and practice.

Track Classification: Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Human Rights Working Group