



Utilising Artificial intelligence (AI) and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) for Conflict Prevention: Lessons Learned from Latin America and the Caribbean

Discussion Note

Although Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region has been free from inter-state armed conflicts for the past two decades, violence, coups, human rights abuses, and the presence of illegal armed groups continue to pose significant challenges to peace and security across the region. As the UN centres its attention on an open, free, secure and human-centred digital future for all, including with the recent development of the [Global Digital Compact \(GDC\)](#), peacebuilders across Latin America and the Caribbean are pioneering steps in exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) and open-source intelligence (OSINT) can support peacebuilding and conflict prevention in a localised, inclusive and conflict-sensitive manner¹.

How can AI be used for conflict prevention?

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) refers to the collection and analysis of publicly available information from sources such as social media, news outlets, and satellite imagery (known as open-source information) OSINT enables real-time geolocation and verification of information, providing independent, alternative data to that from government sources. Through machine learning algorithms, AI enhances OSINT by automating the process of gathering, analysing and verifying vast amounts of data to extract actionable insights. The use of OSINT for data collection and analysis can be conducted remotely enabling civil society organisations (CSOs) to monitor instability and violence more objectively and across the entire region. However, OSINT's effectiveness is limited by the availability of open-source information, which can constrain its impact in areas where such data is scarce or inaccessible.

How does AI support conflict early warning?

One of the major benefits of AI for conflict prevention is that it enhances the accuracy and manageability of [early warning](#) systems. Before the integration of AI, these systems were costly and difficult to maintain. Today, AI enables the development of more accessible and affordable systems that are easier to manage, significantly enhancing the efficiency of data collection and analysis.

AI can generate dashboards that monitor, for example, the movement of small arms and light weapons and violence against indigenous communities. This helps generate visually accessible data-driven information and draw policy conclusions. For instance, [the Small Arms, Light Weapons Dashboard](#) visualises the dynamics of illicit small arms and light weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Similarly, the [Looting Project in Argentina](#) utilises AI tools to analyse looting incidents. Another project named [BACAB](#) focuses on recording and tracking

¹Based on the discussion 'Informal Dialogue with Local Peacebuilders: Peacebuilding Priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean' on 17 September 2024, organised by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

incidents of violence against Indigenous communities and building an organised database. There is significant potential to expand early warning mechanisms rooted in AI to track climate-related security risks and other variables. Over time, AI can analyse these variables together and develop new variables that may elude human analysis, creating the potential for foresight.

At the same time, AI also presents certain risks, particularly concerning the authenticity of the data it generates. Therefore, it remains essential that humans verify and approve data before it is fed into AI systems. Human oversight ensures the integrity of the information being processed, helping to mitigate biases or inaccuracies that AI alone might overlook. Customised AI solutions, combined with human verification, can help minimise risks and provide more reliable, context-sensitive outcomes for conflict prevention efforts, ensuring that technology is applied ethically and responsibly.

Why is AI relevant to peacebuilding and conflict prevention?

In addition to making early warning systems more efficient and manageable, AI offers several additional benefits to conflict prevention. By automating repetitive tasks, AI frees up human resources to concentrate on more strategic programmatic areas in the work of local peacebuilders. This enhances the capacity of peacebuilders to focus on their priorities and needs more strategically. Further, customised GPT Models trained in peacebuilding terminology can be used to translate relevant resources and toolkits into Spanish and Portuguese, as the availability of peacebuilding resources in these languages remains scarce.

What is the role of the private sector in AI for conflict prevention?

The private sector plays a critical role in advancing peacebuilding through the development of AI tools. Companies are increasingly interested in collaborating with peacebuilders, not just for investment returns but also to demonstrate the practical and ethical use of their products. These partnerships allow private companies to showcase how their products and innovations are used responsibly and in ways that address pressing global issues, thus helping bridge the gap between the development and ethical application of their technology.

What are essential considerations when using AI for conflict prevention?

As multi-stakeholder initiatives to adopt technology for conflict prevention grow in scale and impact, the need for comprehensive governance becomes more pressing. Global frameworks must provide both political and financial support to ensure these efforts are sustainable, effective, and aligned with international norms.

This calls for the development of a robust global governance framework that addresses both the opportunities and risks of AI deployment in peacebuilding. Effective AI governance must incorporate principles of safety, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. By creating mechanisms like an International Artificial Intelligence Agency, all stakeholders can ensure AI innovations are governed with appropriate safeguards.

Sustained and quality financial support is crucial for the long-term success of peacebuilding efforts. While technology evolves and becomes more cost-efficient, the pioneering steps for its application remain capital-intensive. Initial investments lay the groundwork, but ongoing funding is essential to scale these initiatives and ensure their lasting impact. Stakeholders must commit to providing the necessary resources to maintain and adapt these efforts over time.