



## Youth Perspectives on the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

Summary Note from the Youth Consultation and the High-Level Dialogue<sup>1</sup>  
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[The 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review \(2025 PBAR\)](#) is a critical milestone in the evolution of the UN approach to peacebuilding that aims to evaluate gaps and develop concrete ways to make peacebuilding more inclusive and responsive to [the needs at the field level](#). Following the adoption of [the Pact of the Future](#), the 2025 PBAR is also an opportunity to strengthen structural and operational prevention. Engagement of youth and their meaningful contribution to peace in security is a critical cornerstone of effective prevention.



The youth consultation and the high-level dialogue served as a vital platform for young peacebuilders to contribute to the 2025 PBAR, as part of the UN System's commitment to ensure the inclusion of youth voices in peace and security. During the consultation, young people conducted operational analysis and highlighted key risks to sustaining peace at the local level and, during the dialogue, discussed with the representatives of Member States and the UN concrete actionable recommendations for a UN peacebuilding architecture to become better equipped to address these risks.

Young people identified five key priority actions that the UN Peacebuilding Architecture can take to advance sustaining peace. The consultation identified the lack of youth empowerment, misinformation and poor governance among the greatest risks for peace and security. In this context, the discussion highlighted the need to ensure that the UN as an institution and global policies are more accessible for young people; to have the UN take a more active position vis-a-vis governments who fail to realise their international commitments on peace and security; and to localise global policies to enable their impact at the field level.

The outcomes of the consultation and dialogue serve to inform the formal phase of the 2025 PBAR, as well as other related policy processes, such as the second progress study on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and the 10th Anniversary of the YPS Agenda. Beyond policy commitments, the participants expressed the need to translate the perspectives of young people into concrete and tangible actions based on the points below.

**The following are the key takeaways from the discussion:**

- 1. The UN Peacebuilding Architecture should ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of youth in every aspect of peacebuilding and conflict prevention.**

<sup>1</sup> The youth consultation and the high-level meeting were organised by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), with technical support of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS).

Young people are recognised as the key stakeholders in peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/RES/75/201-S/RES/2558](#), OP1) and have a well-recognised transformative potential ([S/2024/207](#), para. 29). In Gaza, young people continue to inspire the commitment to peace despite the ongoing atrocities. Youth in Ukraine have been implementing conflict-sensitive humanitarian programmes and delivering necessary aid to communities. Yet the courage, potential and innovative ideas of youth are often dismissed by other peacebuilding stakeholders.

Meaningful engagement of youth requires the development of the environment for young people to thrive. Both *investing in capacity- and confidence-building*, as well as *ensuring access to the rights for diverse youth* is essential to equip them with the capacities needed for meaningful contributions to conflict prevention and sustaining peace in line with the UN Security Council resolutions on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) ([S/RES/2250](#), [S/RES/2419](#), and [S/RES/2535](#)).



There are several obstacles to youth full, meaningful and equal participation in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. First, *weak governance* further contributes to inequality. Young people often face significant barriers to participating equally in public life, including limited access to human rights and workforce opportunities. Last year was the largest election year in history but young people reported feeling excluded from the political processes. Free, fair and inclusive elections are an indicator of sustaining peace. Second, *existing limited youth empowerment programmes* are frequently concentrated in larger cities, reducing their inclusivity and leaving rural and marginalised areas underserved. Third, *quality and quantity financing for youth peace and security work* remains insufficient, with available funding not including a youth marker and great obstacles for young peacebuilders to access. In developing countries, where youth constitute the majority of the population, the least resources are available to support youth work. Fourth, the UN rarely prioritises building *systematic and institutionalised relationships with youth-led networks and community structures* at the field level. Many tools, consultations, and opportunities intended for civil society are not translated into local languages, further restricting young people's ability to actively engage in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The impact of lacking youth participation on the society is significant and includes persistence of conflict due to youth radicalisation, economic stagnation, social dissolution, and civil disengagement.

During the discussion, it was pointed out that the increase in crises and violent conflict, along with the normalisation of conflict (e.g., the situation in Gaza), necessitate innovative peacebuilding responses. A good example of youth inclusion was highlighted from Cyprus, where youth work is seen as an integral part of conflict resolution. Ensuring the participation of young people in all aspects of peace and security, while not an innovative but rather rhetorical idea, has the potential to make peacebuilding policy and programming more impactful to advance peace at the field level. To realise sustaining peace goals, renewed commitment to action is required.

To ensure that the youth voices are heard and their potential is harnessed for sustainable peace, the UN peacebuilding architecture could consider the following recommendations:

1. **Encouraging governments to foster strong governance and ensure youth access to rights:** UN field presences should advocate for and provide technical support to national governments to promote transparent, accountable and inclusive governance and guarantee young people's equal access to political participation, education, social security, healthcare, and other fundamental rights. In achieving civic engagement, the priority should be placed not on mere listening to young people in ad-hoc consultations, but on creating spaces for young people to have an active role in shaping policy and programming. A national framework for youth engagement can ensure full, equal and meaningful inclusion. Introducing a quota for youth participation in government initiatives is an option for enabling transformative input.
2. **Investing in capacity-building for diverse youth:** The UN Country Teams (UNCTs) should support youth-led programmes in developing market-aligned income-generating activities, mentorship and training programmes for youth employment, promoting entrepreneurship, and enhancing their strategic communication and fundraising skills, as well as conflict resolution capacities. To ensure inclusivity and effectiveness, these programmes should be accessible in local languages and tailored to reach rural areas. Micro-grants are effective to pilot youth-led initiatives. Youth networks are ideally positioned to run such programming and administer small grants (e.g., [GPPAC](#), [UNOY](#)).
3. **Building systematic and institutionalised partnerships with young people:** In line with [the UN System-Wide Community Engagement Guidelines](#), the UNCTs should regularly conduct mapping exercises to identify and engage with existing youth-led community structures, such as youth peace champions and youth-led national and local networks. These structures are designed to represent and remain accountable to local constituencies, making their inclusion a valuable source of diverse expertise for UN processes. Regular mapping ensures the identification of new stakeholders, fostering dynamic partnerships. Once established, the partnership can include joint activities, such as conflict analysis, and create consistent opportunities for meaningful youth contributions, such as in Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and Cooperation Framework monitoring. The engagement of young peacebuilders should not be solely limited to the YPS action, but integrated across all aspects of the UNCTs work. It is beneficial if the spaces for civil society contributions have a dedicated quote for young people to ensure their voices are heard.
4. **Prioritising financing for peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives:** While funding for humanitarian action is more available in [the current financing climate](#), it must be allocated in a way that supports sustainable peace initiatives and remains conflict sensitive. The UN should advocate with Member States to reduce military spendings and ensure increased national budget allocation and increased bilateral aid for prevention and peacebuilding, in line with [the Pact for the Future](#) (Action 13(c)). The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) should replenish its resources for the [Youth Promotion Initiative \(YPI\)](#), as it did not disburse any funding for youth-focused peacebuilding programming in 2023. Bilateral donors could support such programming; however, the assessed contributions should be dedicated to support the YPI. All funding available for peacebuilding must allow for adaptive programming and adhere to [the principles of](#)



[quality financing](#). As requested in [the Pact for the Future](#), the Secretary-General should make information on a Global Youth Investment Platform (Action 34(a)) publicly available and co-design such a Platform with young people through their respective global coalitions, such as [the Global Coalition on YPS](#). The [principles of quality financing](#) should be considered by the donors to ensure that existing resources are accessible for young people.

## 2. The UN field presences should promote Member States' accountability for global commitments, as enshrined in the UN Charter.



The 2025 PBAR takes place amidst a well-recognised need [to evaluate the impact and the capacity of the multilateral system to accomplish its goals](#). Young people perceive that the UN falls short in upholding the principles of [the UN Charter](#), often avoiding holding governments accountable for violations of fundamental rights and commitments to sustaining peace and serving the goals of the UN system itself, rather than needs at the field level. *The lack of proper accountability mechanisms* - as one of the obstacles to sustaining peace - is typically justified by appeals to the principles of national ownership, non-interference, and impartiality. However, such an approach undermines the UN's

core mandate to uphold human rights and prevent conflict. Further, *the absence of monitoring, transparent reporting, and effective follow-up mechanisms on global peacebuilding commitments* further weakens opportunities for sustaining peace. This context risks eroding the UN's credibility and creates critical gaps in sustaining peace efforts. Within the global peacebuilding architecture, the UN's role as champion of international norms is irreplaceable. Rather than focusing on project implementation, the UN should prioritise fulfilling its unique and indispensable function in advancing global peacebuilding objectives. Namely, the UN is expected to leverage its convening power, technical expertise, and political accompaniment.

To fulfill its obligations under the UN Charter, the UN peacebuilding architecture could consider the following recommendations:

1. **Engaging with Member States to promote sustaining peace:** The UNCTs should constructively engage national governments to increase their capacity to advance sustaining peace, including by conducting fair and free elections and reducing military budgets. These include the development and strengthening of relevant national laws and justice systems, ensuring independent reporting, and guaranteeing accountability for all. The UN fact-finding missions should be connected to other mechanisms within the UN System to move beyond pure evidence collection and ensure accountability and/or systemic change. The UNHQ could further develop incentives for the governments to establish accountability mechanisms, including by presenting them not as a source of 'punishment' but as a source of 'championship' and potential avenues for political and financial support. The UN should also start engaging Member States on the implementation of their commitments made in [the Pact for the Future](#), including on YPS (Action 20).

2. **Articulating Member States’ responsibilities on peacebuilding and sustaining peace:** The UN should promote improved national action on internationally-agreed commitments on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The 2025 PBAR should articulate [Member States’ responsibilities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace](#). Once these responsibilities are clarified, the UN actors (i.e., UNITAR or UNDP) can partner with think tanks to develop targeted and practical capacity building programs on leadership for sustaining peace for government representatives, civil society and other national partners.
3. **Establishing transparent oversight for Member States’ peacebuilding responsibilities:** The Annual Peacebuilding Week recommended by [the UNSG in his 2024 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace](#) could offer a platform to operationalise such a mechanism. This mechanism could draw on models such as the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) or the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), ensuring accountability and fostering transparency in meeting peacebuilding obligations. It is crucial that new and existing mechanisms enhance accountability by implementing stricter consequences for those violating their international obligations. For example, after three instances of government-sponsored human rights violations, measures such as suspending a Member State's voting rights in the UN General Assembly could be considered.
4. **Raising awareness among youth on accountability mechanisms for peacebuilding and sustaining peace:** The UNCTs should actively support young people, through their networks and community structures, in understanding and utilising existing (soft and hard) accountability mechanisms to encourage governments to advance peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This can be achieved through targeted awareness campaigns, capacity-building workshops, and the creation of accessible resources tailored to diverse youth audiences. Additionally, appointing a dedicated civil society liaison to disseminate this information and provide guidance to young people can bridge the gap between global mechanisms and local communities.

### 3. The UN should promote localisation of global policies on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.



The 2025 PBAR is [mandated](#) to improve the UN’s efforts on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, with a focus on implementation and measurable impact at the field level. Therefore, it must prioritise the lived experiences of young people and lead to a bold and meaningful systemic change. A critical step in achieving this is the localisation of global policy processes, where young people are part of both creation and implementation of global policy. Localisation relies on the availability and meaningful application in global policy of intersectional conflict analysis that is sensitive to age, gender, sexual, ability and racial diversity. The participation of young people in global policy processes is

essential for global policymakers to have access to such conflict analysis.

There are however several obstacles that prevent youth from engaging in global policy. First, young people frequently report receiving *inadequate information about global policy processes* until it is too late for them to contribute meaningfully. Second, global policy processes can also be *hard to understand* due to the complexity of the system and the technical language used. Third, *youth participation is often an afterthought*, heavily reliant on advocacy from YPS champions within Member States' mission or international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). Fourth, even when included, young people are rarely provided with *the necessary resources and support* to ensure their meaningful engagement. For instance, interpretation services are rarely available, and existing resources often use complex policy language that young peacebuilders find difficult to navigate.

Ensuring that young people can engage meaningfully with global policies has a potential to advance sustaining peace by addressing their needs effectively. The recommendations below can inform an international framework/action plan for meaningful youth engagement in peacebuilding and sustaining peace (similar to [the 7-Point Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding](#)) that Member States can request in the 2025 PBAR outcome document.

To ensure meaningful participation of young people in global policy processes, the UN peacebuilding architecture could consider the following recommendations: actions:

- 1. Strengthening modalities for youth engagement in global policy processes:** UNHQ representatives must prioritise meaningful involvement of diverse youth in consultations for ongoing global policy processes. Dedicated youth-specific consultations should include a clear feedback loop, ensuring young peacebuilders understand how their perspectives have shaped the process. To sustain engagement, ongoing platforms for knowledge-sharing are essential, enabling young peacebuilders to contribute insights while deepening their understanding of global policy processes. For instance, the Peacebuilding Commission, in line with [its Strategic Action Plan on Youth in Peacebuilding](#), should regularly invite youth briefers to its meetings. Similarly, the Member States on the UN Security Council should champion the inclusion of young briefers and make YPS discussions in the Council more regular, including an annual YPS open debate. The support needs to be provided to ensure youth impactful participation. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) should provide resources and training to help young peacebuilders deliver targeted and impactful presentations. Similarly, the Global Coalition on YPS should dedicate strategic sessions to provide relevant updates and equip young people to participate in respective policy processes. Financial support must be available for young people to participate in all consultations, and they should not be expected to cover their participation from their own resources. The policy processes (e.g., the second progress study on YPS) should not be rushed to ensure meaningful engagement of youth, and feedback loop must exist to inform local peacebuilders about how their perspectives were reflected in the global policy processes.
- 2. Involving young people early in the development of global policy discussions:** The UN leads on respective global policy processes must ensure that diverse youth are involved from the outset of discussions to ensure they have a meaningful role in shaping the process. This should not only involve topics relevant to YPS, but all global policy discussions. For example, youth active participation should be prioritised in the development of the second progress study on the implementation of the YPS Agenda, the

Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the Ministerial Meeting on Peacekeeping, and other key ongoing initiatives. The inclusion of the YPS as a sub-theme of [the Second CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding](#) is a good practice that could be applied in other contexts.

3. **Enhancing the accessibility of global policy processes:** The UN must ensure its global policy processes are more accessible to youth. There are several avenues to enhance accessibility. First, hosting these processes in locations with fewer visa restrictions and incorporating regional consultations as a means of input can significantly broaden participation. These processes should be co-designed with young peacebuilders to ensure their inclusivity and relevance. Second, all global policy processes must offer interpretation services in at least the UN's official languages throughout their duration, with outreach resources also available in multiple languages. Third, simplifying the language of global policies, translating them into local languages, and making them accessible to young people in their communities are equally essential.
4. **Creating platforms for knowledge sharing among local actors:** Young peacebuilders find special value in opportunities to engage with other diverse local peacebuilders, exchange experiences and enhance their collective expertise. To support this, dedicated and inclusive platforms for civil society should accompany all global policy processes. While these platforms may be observed by international stakeholders, they must remain independently designed, directed, and managed by local peacebuilders to preserve their authenticity and relevance.
5. **Supporting locally-led peacebuilding networks as key intermediaries:** The UN should prioritise partnerships with locally-led peacebuilding networks when designing consultative processes, as these networks represent diverse constituencies and bring valuable expertise to policy discussions. By coordinating internally, these networks can provide concise, inclusive, and strategic input. Additionally, they play a crucial role in preparing communities to engage effectively with these policies.

#### 4. The UN should prioritise action in addressing misinformation as a security risk.



Misinformation fuels the polarisation within communities, exacerbated by technological advancements and widespread internet use that allows 'fake news' and hate speech to negatively affect societies. In the absence of a global governance framework for AI and with limited media literacy among young people, the risk of misinformation remains high. Misinformation is a substantial risk to peace and security as it leads to social dissolution and conflict. Misinformation is often used to prolong conflict by fostering radicalisation, allowing for recruitment, and deepening societal divides. While [the Global Digital Compact](#) (GDC) attempts to address these

challenges, the UN should consider misinformation as a risk to peace and security and develop an approach to addressing misinformation and its impacts.

To address misinformation through peacebuilding tools, the UN could take the following actions:

1. **Promoting increased media governance in compliance with international human rights law:** The UN should conduct capacity-building for developing countries in the development and implementation of media governance frameworks that are consistent with international human rights obligations. The right to access to information should focus on the right to access the correct information, and the freedom of speech should not enable hate speech. Additionally, the UN should encourage the governments to establish independent regulatory bodies to oversee media governance, foster partnerships with civil society to promote transparency, and advocate for digital literacy programs to empower citizens to critically evaluate media content. Globally, the UN should establish a strong system of justice to hold Member States accountable for propagating misinformation and hate speech.
2. **Supporting locally-led initiatives in media literacy:** The UN should prioritise financial and technical support for youth-led initiatives that promote media literacy within local communities. Such efforts are essential to equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed to critically assess content, engage safely with information providers, and build resilience against the harmful effects of misinformation and disinformation. The PBF should support programming aimed at providing community awareness raising, media literacy and capacity building to handle hate speech and propaganda.
3. **Advocating for increased fact-checking in the use of AI:** The UN peacebuilding partners should engage in the process of the development of a comprehensive global AI data framework that enhances transparency, accountability, and ethical use of AI. The 2019 UN Strategic Action Plan for Combating Hate Speech could provide some guidance; however, the implementation of this Action Plan still needs to be strengthened. Conflict sensitivity should be an indispensable part of the methodology in the development and implementation of such a framework. Leveraging AI for fact-checking offers significant potential, but human oversight remains essential to verify information and ensure accuracy. Future global policy developments should prioritise integrating this approach, alongside initiatives to establish clear guidelines for AI use.