

**Committee:** SPECPOL 1

**Topic:** The Question of Protecting most Vulnerable People (women, children and the elderly) in Failed States

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## Summary

There are two features which qualify a failed state. The first is that the government cannot project authority over the people and the territory. The second is that it is unable to protect its boundaries. In other words, the government structure is completely unsuccessful. The government of a failed state is unable to control its people or resources, and there are very few, if any, public services available.

Social protection is steadily being recognised as an essential public service for the poor alongside health, education, water and sanitation. However, like services such as health and education delivering social protection in fragile states is very difficult.

In fragile states humanitarian aid has often been the plan A for providing social protection. Humanitarian aid is often lead by international aid agencies under the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, these provide an ethical framework. However, there are a number of limitations with humanitarian aid, because it is primarily delivered by international actors, there are concerns that it undermines national and local capacities.

As vulnerability, human rights violations and causes of conflicts are deeply connected, a comprehensive analysis of those elements is key for conflict prevention but also for conflict resolution.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Human rights violations as causes and consequences of conflicts:** Lack of satisfaction of human needs and of protection and fulfilment of human rights

**Human rights violations as transformers of conflict dynamics:** New grievances can be created by the real and perceived violation of human rights by one or more parties

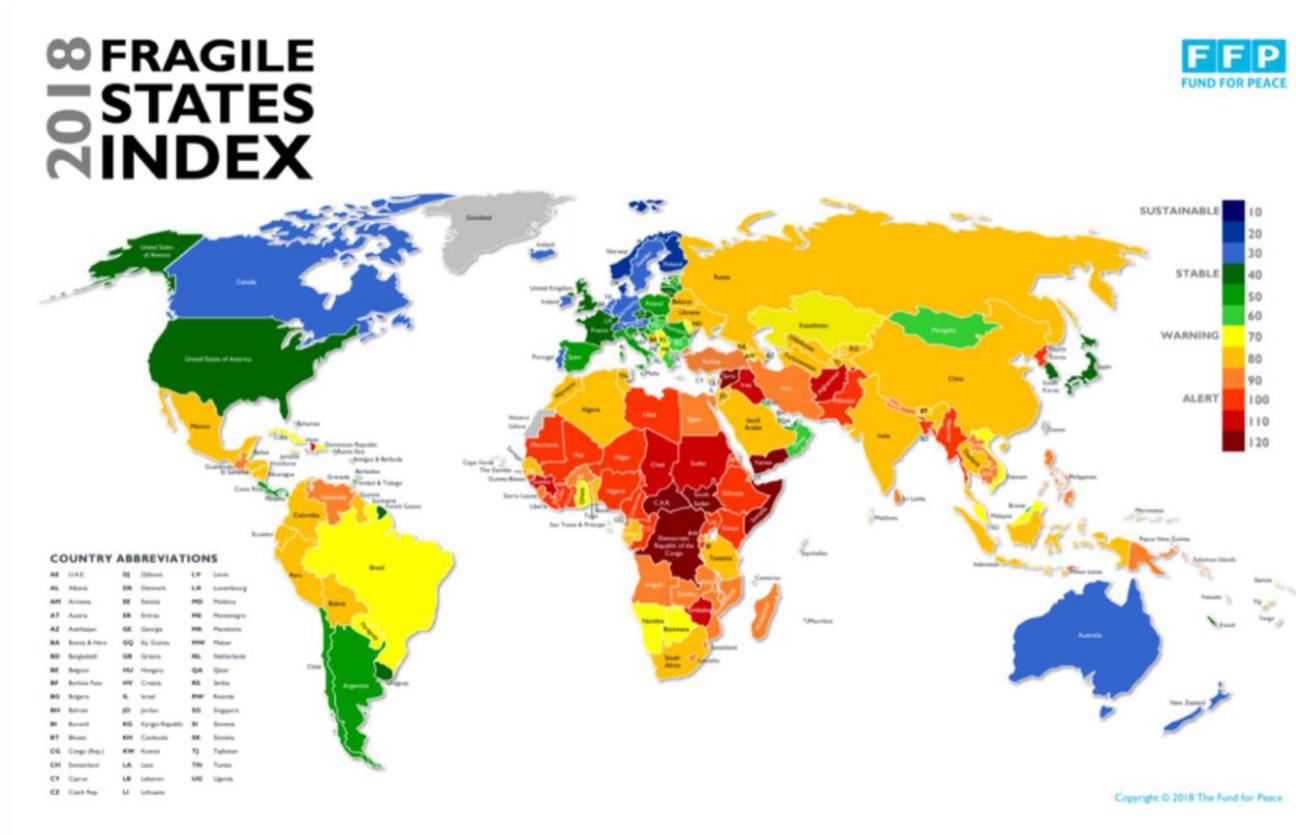
**Human rights violations and demands for accountability:** Tensions between the pursuit of accountability and the pursuit of peace agreements.

**Fragile states:** A fragile region or state has weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions, and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society.

**Social protection:** The set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.

**Human rights violations:** The denial to individuals of their fundamental moral entitlements. It is, in a sense, to treat them as if they are less than human and undeserving of respect and dignity.

## Background Information



Some of the states most in danger of failing include states like Nicaragua, Brazil, Sudan, and North Korea, due to corruption. States like Libya, Iraq, Pakistan and Siberia are in danger of failing because of rebellion. Other states including Nigeria and Nepal are at risk because of democratic collapse. States including Iraq, Yemen and Turkey are in danger to religious and ethnic conflicts

Reasons why states have failed:

1. Somalia: One must-have for successful economies is an effective centralized state. Without this, there is no hope of providing order, an effective system of laws, mechanisms for resolving disputes, or basic public goods.

Yet large parts of the world today are still dominated by stateless societies. Although countries like Somalia or the new country of South Sudan do have internationally recognized governments, they exercise little power outside their capitals, and maybe not even there.

2. South Africa: In 1904 in South Africa, the mining industry created a caste system for jobs. From then on, only Europeans could be blacksmiths, brickmakers, boilermakers — basically any skilled job or profession. This “color bar,” as South Africans called it, was extended to the entire economy in 1926 and lasted until the 1980s, robbing black South Africans of any opportunity to use their skills and talents. They were condemned to work as unskilled laborers in the mines and in agriculture — and at very low wages, too, making it extremely profitable for the elite who owned the mines and farms.

3. Egypt: When elites control an economy, they often use their power to create monopolies and block the entry of new people and firms. This was exactly how Egypt worked for three decades under Hosni Mubarak. The government and military owned vast swaths of the economy — by some estimates, as much as 40 percent. Even when they did “liberalize,” they privatized large parts of the economy right into the hands of Mubarak’s friends and those of his son Gamal.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

USAID (the United States Agency for International Development)

UNICEF

OECD (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)

WHO (World Health Organization)

ODI (Overseas Development Institute)

## Timeline of events

9/11/2001 - Afghanistan: Terrorists attacked the United States. They hijacked four airplanes in mid-flight. The terrorists flew two of the planes into two skyscrapers at the World Trade Center in New York City. The impact caused the buildings to catch fire and collapse. Another plane destroyed part of the Pentagon (the U.S. military headquarters) in Arlington, Virginia.

1 July 2010: The United Nations refugee agency called on countries worldwide to do more to protect migrants trying to reach their destinations by river or sea after 16 people drowned while attempting to cross a river on the Turkish-Greek border.

29 June 2011: Two United Nations entities urged governments in Europe and Central Asia to immediately end the practice of placing young children in State-run homes for infants because of the risk of neglect and abuse.

5 October 2017: Warning of threats to the global asylum environment, the United Nations refugee agency's protection chief stressed the importance of sustained engagement by the international community to keep refugees high on the political agenda.

13 JUNE 2018 - GA/12028: General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Protecting Palestinian Civilians Following Rejection of United States Amendment to Condemn Hamas Rocket Fire

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- 8 March 2018 SC/13240: The security Council outlined sweeping actions to improve implementation of its landmark women, peace and security agenda, covering its work on countering violent extremism and terrorism, improving working methods and broadly taking up the gender recommendations of a just-completed global study it had requested two years ago
- 22 May 2018 SC/13348: Calling for access to education and eliminating child labour, as well as bolstering equal treatment for women in the labour market, the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) concluded its debates on children's rights and women's advancement today
- 8 October 2018 GA/SHC/4230: The Security Council adopted a resolution aimed at further crystalizing the protection of children in armed conflicts, including by combating their recruitment by non-State armed groups and treating formerly recruited children primarily as victims.

- 17 December 2018 SC/13625: the Security Council today renewed its authorization of the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the devastated country across borders and lines of conflict for a further 12 months, until 10 January 2020

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

There are three reasons why aid has failed to reduce poverty in fragile states: there has not been enough aid; the aid provided has been delivered at the wrong time; and it has been delivered in ineffective ways.

Donors tend not to deliver substantial aid to fragile states until there is a crisis. Moreover, in post-conflict states they tend to decrease aid precisely when it could become more effective. As well as being badly timed, aid flows to fragile states are more volatile, mainly because donors make funding decisions based on short-term government performance. This would make it harder for any government to manage resources and reduce poverty, let alone a very weak one.

Much aid in fragile states is delivered through short-term, uncoordinated projects which are not part of a broader development strategy. Much of this support is labelled 'humanitarian', and it has become the dominant mode of working in fragile states because it is delivered outside state structures. Humanitarian agencies are used to working in insecure environments and can often reach poor people and provide services when others cannot. However, humanitarian assistance is not effective in laying the foundations for longer-term development.

## Possible Solutions

A weak central government, bad public services and political exploitation are some of the reasons because of which some states as Bolivia, Peru and Colombia have failed. However there is no single model for how we should work better in fragile states. Before we can decide to deploy significant resources, we need to improve how we catch early warning signs of instability. This needs a deeper understanding about the political economy of the states concerned.

Given that aid alone will not be enough, a joint diplomatic approach needs to be developed, with security and aid approaches as appropriate. This needs to be complemented by clear decision-making in the international community about who gets involved in which countries.

In an ideal world, the international community would prevent states from becoming fragile or unstable. This probably won't happen everywhere, but more can be done to improve the detection of early warning signs indicating a state's pending collapse.

If the response is going to address a lack of political will as well as a lack of capacity, the international community needs to have a clearer understanding of the reasons for state failure, which will vary from place to place.

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