



**Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade:**  
*Inquiry into the role of Australia's international development programme in preventing conflict*

**IOM's Recommendations**

1. **Recommendation I:** Continue support on programmes to advance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN); and integrate political-economic and conflict-sensitivity analysis in all of Australia's international development programmes in fragile contexts, drawing on tools such as IOM's Conflict Sensitivity Analysis System (CSAS).
2. **Recommendation II:** Maintain and prioritize predictable, multi-year funding to the multilateral system, particularly to peacebuilding mechanisms such as the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to stabilize displaced and host communities, reduce the risk of conflict escalation, prevent further regional deterioration and promote progress towards solutions.
3. **Recommendation III:** Provide funding to Violence and Conflict Prevention (VCP) programmes that enhance capabilities for peace and recovery in the Indo-Pacific region, including Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) interventions, community stabilisation and reparations as well as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).
4. **Recommendation IV:** Prioritize investment in human mobility tracking systems adapted to climate-vulnerable contexts, including the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT), to monitor conflict risks and strengthen climate security in the Indo-Pacific.

**1. IOM Programming on Violence and Conflict Prevention**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the role of Australia's international development programme in preventing conflict. The submission builds on IOM's previous engagement with the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and DFAT in March 2024 to discuss Australia's international development policy and aid programme.

IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, supporting governments worldwide to design and implement migration systems that promote safe, orderly and regular migration. Australia is a founding IOM Member State, and IOM has worked in partnership with the Australian Government for more than 70 years. Further information about IOM's work is available on the IOM website: <https://www.iom.int/>

IOM is a multi-hatted agency operating across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN), which links immediate humanitarian assistance, with long-term development and peacebuilding efforts. IOM's global prioritization of measures to (i) save lives and protect people on the move and (ii) advance solutions to displacement position the Organization at the centre of efforts to support the shift from humanitarian response toward recovery and longer-term stability.

This submission draws upon IOM's Peace, Recovery and Solutions expertise, which includes dedicated expertise in the fields of Violence and Conflict Prevention; Community Stabilization;



Durable Solutions; Transitional Justice, Land, Property and Reparations (LPR); and Electoral Support. It also draws upon IOM's Migration and Border Management experience, including expertise in the field of Community Policing (CP), Security Sector Reform (SSR), and Border and Identity Management.

## **2. Australia's International Development Policy**

Australia's International Development Policy is centred on building peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, positioning effective development assistance as a key tool of statecraft that builds regional resilience.<sup>1</sup> In the context of shifting power dynamics and increasing competition in the Indo-Pacific, stability is a core strategic interest, and the policy reflects Australia's commitment towards being a partner of choice.

Australia's development programme supports conflict prevention by addressing underlying causes of instability including climate change and social inequality. The policy's emphasis on gender equality, social inclusion and locally led development demonstrates an understanding that exclusion and marginalisation can intensify conflict risks. Engagement with regional frameworks such as the Pacific Islands Forum also emphasizes Australia's commitment to collective security and regional cooperation

Central to Australia's approach is the HDPN. Australia's International Development Policy recognizes that humanitarian assistance alone cannot resolve protracted crises. Instead, sustained development engagement is required to strengthen institutions, build resilience and support inclusive governance. Australia's support for international norms protecting humanitarian access, including the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, and its recent membership of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, provide important opportunities to advance peacebuilding practice informed by Indo-Pacific experience.

## **3. IOM Response to the Terms of Reference**

### ***3.1 The role of Australia's international development program in building resilience in fragile states***

There is strong evidence that international development plays a critical role in building resilience in fragile states, where private investment is limited and state capacity is constrained.<sup>2</sup> Within the HDPN, aid is essential for providing emergency support during crisis; however, humanitarian responses must be complemented with development assistance that addresses structural drivers of conflict, improves governance and enables long-term, inclusive development.<sup>3</sup> Strengthening community and civic participation builds social capital and enhances the legitimacy of government institutions, contributing to resilience against conflict, political instability and environmental disasters.<sup>4</sup> By integrating humanitarian action, with long-term development and peacebuilding, resilience-building initiatives sit at the core of the HDPN.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), [Australia's International Development Policy](#). (DFAT, 2023)

<sup>2</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [States of Fragility](#). (OECD, 2018)

<sup>3</sup> International Development Association, [Empowering Fragile States: IDA's Strategic Role in Conflict-Affected Areas and Vulnerable Countries](#), (World Bank Group, 2024)

<sup>4</sup> Peace Direct and the Alliance for Peacebuilding, [Local Peacebuilding: What Works and Why](#). (Peace Insight, 2019)



To further build resilience in fragile states, Australia's development programme should systematically integrate conflict sensitivity analysis into programme design and implementation. IOM's Conflict Sensitivity Analysis System (CSAS) promotes an understanding of conflict dynamics and drivers and informs operational decisions by analysing the potential impact of each intervention in the local context.<sup>5</sup> By systematically embedding conflict sensitivity into its operations, IOM reduces the risk of exacerbating conflicts and actively contributes to the stability of conflict-affected communities.

#### **Case Study 1: Peacebuilding in Papua New Guinea (PNG)**

PNG is a key example of an Australian international development programme successfully building resilience in a fragile state. Australia contributed significantly to ending the separatist conflict in PNG between 1988 and 1997 through the Bougainville peace process, representing a notable success in post-conflict peacebuilding.<sup>6</sup> Australia continues to promote improved governance in PNG with longstanding partnerships between defence and police forces, government agencies as well as through Australia's development programme. Recently, IOM, with funding from DFAT through the UN One Fund, has begun implementing the Joint Programme (JP) "Strengthening Humanitarian Preparedness and Response to Disaster-Induced Displacement in Papua New Guinea." The programme supports the HDPN by addressing instability linked to unplanned urban migration and climate-induced displacement, directly contributing to resilience and conflict prevention.

**Recommendation 1:** Continue support on programmes to advance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN); and integrate political-economic and conflict-sensitivity analysis in all of Australia's international development programmes in fragile contexts, drawing on tools such as IOM's Conflict Sensitivity Analysis System (CSAS).

### **3.2 The strategic use of Australia's international development program to prevent conflict in the Indo-Pacific**

From climate change to geopolitical rivalry, there are a number of threats to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, increasing the likelihood of large-scale displacement. Australia's international development programme therefore plays a critical strategic role in managing the drivers of conflict, violence, irregular migration and forced displacement across the region.

As geopolitical competition intensifies in the Indo-Pacific, Australia's international development programme plays a strategic role in shaping regional influence. Analysis by the Lowy Institute warns that unmanaged competition for influence among key development partners can compromise good governance and transparency by prioritising geopolitical objectives over local needs.<sup>8</sup> The Lowy Institute calls for traditional donors to capitalise on areas of strength, such as social inclusion, and continue engagement with multilateral initiatives to set high accountability standards.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, reliance on a narrower set of partners or diminished multilateral involvement could reduce influence in areas such as migration governance and border management, as governments in the Indo-Pacific become increasingly dependent on a limited group of donors amid shifting aid patterns.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Conflict Sensitivity](#), IOM website, n.d.

<sup>6</sup> Brigg, M. & Bleiker, R., *Mediating Across Difference: Oceanic and Asian Approaches to Conflict Resolution* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011)

<sup>8</sup> Keen, M. & Tidwell, A., [Geopolitics in the Pacific Islands: Playing for Advantage](#), (Lowy Institute, 2024)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Duke, R., Dayant, A., Ahsan, N. & Rajah, R., [Pacific Aid Map: 2025 Key Findings](#), (Lowy Institute, 2025)



Reductions in Official Development Assistance from traditional donors have already widened gaps in the multilateral system, with direct consequences for stability. In the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh funding shortfalls have contributed to worsening humanitarian conditions, with UNICEF reporting sharp increases in child malnutrition.<sup>11</sup> Refugees International further warn that tentative progress is at risk due to aid cuts.<sup>12</sup> These deteriorating conditions not only increase pressure on host communities in Bangladesh but also increase pressure on regional migration systems and heighten the risk of further displacement and regional spillover.

In this context, IOM welcomes the approval of the next three-year phase (2026–2028) of Australia's multi-year humanitarian package for Myanmar and Bangladesh, under which IOM will receive AUD 12 million over three years to deliver multipurpose cash and health assistance. This funding supports social stability by meeting basic needs and helping communities remain resilient amid ongoing conflict. As the OECD notes, declining donor support in fragile contexts undermines conflict-prevention and stabilization efforts.<sup>13</sup> Sustained Australian engagement therefore serves both humanitarian and strategic objectives, reinforcing Australia's role as a reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific.

Moreover, as the second biggest receiver in 2024 of the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), IOM works with UN partners to deliver joint national and regional initiatives that support transitions to recovery. This includes the recent efforts of enhancing UN coordination and cost-effectiveness initiatives such as the Peace Building Architecture Review,<sup>14</sup> Humanitarian Reset,<sup>15</sup> and UN80 reform,<sup>16</sup> where IOM has advocated for Civil Society Engagement, innovative and coordinating financing mechanisms, and joint programming, government-led processes. Australia's role should continue to advocate for multilateral approaches that strengthen local capacities while supporting international development agencies in a more coherent, effective and joint approach, in alignment with UN coordination and cost effectiveness initiatives.

**Recommendation II:** Maintain and prioritize predictable, multi-year funding to the multilateral system, particularly to peacebuilding mechanisms such as the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to stabilize displaced and host communities, reduce the risk of conflict escalation and prevent further regional deterioration.

### 3.3 Options for effective support through Australia's aid program in pre-conflict and/or post-conflict zones

IOM is at the forefront of addressing the complex interplay between migration, displacement, peace, access to justice and security, with IOM's Peace and Recovery related programmes, including Violence and Conflict Prevention (VCP), community stabilization and transitional justice programmes offering options for effective support in fragile and conflict-affected settings. IOM's work in this area focuses on the prevention and resolution of conflict by creating conducive environments for sustainable peace and recovery; as well as preventing the emergence or recurrence of violence. This includes empowering communities and individuals, while

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, 'Bangladesh: Rohingya children's acute hunger surges amid funding cuts,' (UNICEF, 11 March 2025)

<sup>12</sup> Sullivan, D. P. & Karim, L. *A Closing Window: How Aid Cuts Are Undermining Rohingya Possibilities*, (Refugees International, 2025)

<sup>13</sup> OECD, *Cuts in official development assistance: OECD projections for 2025 and the near term* (OECD, 2025)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/2025-review-un-peacebuilding-architecture>  
United Nations, *2025 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture*, (UN, 2025)

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, *Humanitarian Reset*, (UN, 2025)

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *UN80 Initiative*, (UN, 2025)



strengthening national legal frameworks and strategies. Programmatic responses include Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE), community stabilization and reparations and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

i) Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)

PVE approaches address specific risk factors and vulnerabilities to violent extremism such as online radicalization and disinformation, social media dynamics, identity-based grievances, or gaps in youth engagement, alongside socio-economic exclusion.<sup>18</sup> These areas of concern align with Australia's Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism Strategy which lists increased youth engagement with violent extremism and the use of digital technologies as emerging challenges.<sup>19</sup> IOM interventions support vulnerable youth through engagement with local community members, foster youth participation and invest in critical thinking, inherent bias and media consumption skill building. In line with Australia's commitment to strengthen counter-terrorism partnerships and capability in the Indo-Pacific region, Australia's aid program should support IOM as a PVE partner to support programming that builds resilience to violent extremism and xenophobia.

ii) Community stabilization and resilience-building

In post-conflict settings, Australia's aid programme can support stabilization and long-term resilience through Community Based Planning (CBP), IOM's flagship approach to participatory programming in displacement and migration crises. CBP is a well-developed form of community engagement that is firmly rooted in participation and accountability principles and is now used throughout IOM's diverse global portfolio. For example, IOM PNG uses CBP for both disaster risk management as well as peacebuilding across the country.<sup>20</sup> Australia can support CBP initiatives in Indo-Pacific contexts to stay aligned with its commitment to promoting community-led solutions.

Australia's aid programme can also support peacebuilding through investment in community-level conflict prevention efforts, specifically through community policing programmes. IOM's Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Division provides support to requesting Member States in the development of community policing initiatives focusing on communities with large numbers of migrants. Community policing in border areas enables a decentralized approach in which government officials establish a proactive relationship with border communities to help avert cross-border crime, identify issues and build ownership of regional challenges.<sup>21</sup> IOM has assisted Member States such as PNG in building trust and stronger ties between law enforcement, migrants and host communities, contributing towards better social cohesion and conflict prevention.

iii) Reparations for conflict and displacement-related violations

In the aftermath of systemic violence and conflict induced displacement, countries necessitate support in implementing official mechanisms for responding to reparation demands from individuals affected by violence. Australia's aid program can support context-specific, rights-

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<sup>18</sup> IOM, [PVE Info sheet](#) (IOM, 2021)

<sup>19</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, [Australia's Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy 2025](#), (Commonwealth of Australia, 2025)

<sup>20</sup> IOM, [Papua New Guinea Crisis Response Plan 2024](#) (IOM, 2024)

<sup>21</sup> IOM, [Community Engagement and Policing Info Sheet](#) (IOM, 2023)





based and transformative reparation frameworks which directly contribute to rebuilding trust between communities and governments. IOM provides expert advice, technical assistance, capacity building and direct operational support in designing and implementing reparations, including restitution of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights. IOM has already conducted such work in the Indo-Pacific region, including support to the government and civil society of Sri Lanka, PNG and the Philippines in designing and implementing effective and inclusive reparations mechanisms. IOM is also exploring avenues for collaboration in Myanmar, Bangladesh and Cambodia.

### **Case Study 2: Implementation of the Reparations Law in Sri Lanka**

Following the adoption of the Reparations Act in 2018, IOM, Australia's aid program, delivered through IOM, provided critical support to operationalise the Office for Reparation, a key government body mandated to distribute reparation benefits to tens of thousands of civilian victims of the Sri Lankan Civil War. The assistance focused on expert support, institutional capacity building and enhancing victim and civil society participation. While internal political and economic crises have hindered large-scale reparation initiatives, the Office for Reparations remains one of two pillars of government efforts to address the legacy of the mass human rights violations during the war.

#### **iv) Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**

IOM has provided reintegration solutions to former combatants back into communities for over three decades. The successful reintegration of former combatants is recognized as a key factor in peacebuilding, facilitating longer-term recovery in the transition from conflict to peace.<sup>23</sup> IOM's DDR programmes focus on supporting national governments with policy development, individual case management services and reintegration and reconciliation activities, aiming to address drivers of violence, conflict and related displacement as well as removing barriers to the return of displaced persons.

In recent years, conflicts have become increasingly complex with fewer meaningful political settlements to conflict. In these contexts, traditional DDR programmes are often not viable due to the absence of a signed peace agreement. In response, IOM developed the Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation (DDRR) approach to support governments in implementing DDR processes in situations of ongoing conflict, characterized by the presence of VEOs or groups that have been sanctioned by the UN Security Council.<sup>24</sup> Although DDR related needs are concentrated in only a few specific settings in the Indo-Pacific region such as the Philippines and Indonesia, it should nevertheless be a priority with the increasing risk of violent extremism.

### **Case Study 3: DDR in Sri Lanka**

After the end of Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war in 2009, IOM facilitated the process of reintegrating more than 8 000 former armed group members into local communities using individual socioeconomic profiling, referrals, vocational training and employment opportunities.<sup>25</sup> Local and national community-based initiatives were launched with the aim of

<sup>23</sup> IOM, [DDR Infosheet](#) (IOM, 2021)

<sup>24</sup> IOM, [Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation: Transitional Rehabilitation](#). (IOM, 2021)

<sup>25</sup> IOM, [DDR Compendium](#) (IOM, 2019)

promoting a sense of belonging, dignity and respect, given that these individuals' rehabilitation was directly linked to reconciliation with their communities. The programme was employment oriented, with recipients of reintegration assistance receiving direct livelihood assistance and assistance in developing their own small businesses and other forms of self-employment.

**Recommendation III:** Provide funding to Violence and Conflict Prevention (VCP) programmes that enhance capabilities for peace and recovery in the Indo-Pacific region, including Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) interventions, community stabilization and reparations as well as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

### 3.4 *The impact of international development in the maintenance of peace and prevention of conflict, including for early identification and mitigation of conflict*

International development contributes significantly to the maintenance of peace by addressing the structural drivers of conflict, promoting inclusive governance and supporting early-warning systems for emerging crises (OECD, 2020).<sup>26</sup> Two IOM programmes that have had an important role in conflict identification and prevention are the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT).

#### i) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

IOM undertakes a range of foundational data and analysis interventions to inform collective responses to promote peace and security. For example, the DTM gathers and analyses operational data on displaced and mobile populations to ensure decision-makers and humanitarian partners maximize resources and deliver efficiently, better-targeted, humanitarian and post-crisis programmes.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, DTM provides location-specific insights on population movements, service gaps, and emerging vulnerabilities through field assessments, key informant interviews, and geospatial mapping. Given the Indo-Pacific region's exposure to climate-induced displacement, IOM's recent integration of climate security analytics into early warning systems is particularly relevant for the region.

#### **Case Study 4: DTM in Bangladesh<sup>31</sup>**

IOM Bangladesh Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM), part of IOM's global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) programming, tracks population numbers, movements and needs to inform the Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar. With funding from donors including Australia, IOM Bangladesh NPM has consistently provided data in the Rohingya humanitarian response, enabling humanitarian and development actors to identify potential sources of tension and design interventions to mitigate conflict risks. Complementing this, the DTM REMAP project collects migration and returnee data across Bangladesh, supporting programming that promotes social cohesion, community resilience and stability.

#### ii) Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT)

TTT is a data-driven mechanism that monitors livestock mobility, resource competition and conflict risks linked to pastoralism in climate-stressed contexts. By combining mapping of formal

<sup>26</sup> OECD, [Peacebuilding in Fragile States](#) (OECD, 2020)

<sup>30</sup> IOM, [About DTM](#), (IOM, 2023)

<sup>31</sup> IOM, [DTM Bangladesh](#), IOM website, n.d.



and informal transhumance corridors, flow monitoring, early warning systems and community-level surveys, TTT provides real-time insights into how climatic change and environmental degradation heighten tensions between pastoralist and farming communities. While developed in West and Central Africa, the TTT is highly relevant to Australia's strategic interests in the Pacific, where climate change is a major threat to livelihoods and stability. In several Pacific Island countries, climate-induced land scarcity results in competition between customary landowners, mobile pastoralists and host communities which risks undermining social cohesion.<sup>33</sup> Australia should support the adaptation of TTT-style tools in the Pacific in line with Australia's emphasis on climate security and conflict prevention in the Pacific.

#### **Case Study 5: TTT in West Africa<sup>34</sup>**

Along the Central Transhumance Corridor in West Africa, TTT was deployed to address escalating tensions between pastoralists and farmers during seasonal migrations. At fixed monitoring points in Mali and Burkina Faso, IOM collected real-time data on herd movements, water access, and incidents of crop damage. When early warning alerts indicated large herds approaching cultivated zones in northern Burkina Faso, local authorities and pastoral organizations convened rapid mediation meetings. These interventions resulted in negotiated grazing schedules and temporary water-sharing agreements, preventing violent clashes that had previously occurred during the dry season. Additionally, community dialogue platforms supported by IOM helped resolve 15 disputes over land access within three months, strengthening trust and reducing the risk of retaliatory violence.

**Recommendation IV:** Prioritize investment in human mobility tracking systems including the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT), adapted to climate-vulnerable contexts, to monitor conflict risks and strengthen climate security in the Indo-Pacific.

#### **Conclusion**

Australia's international development programme plays a key role in building resilience and preventing conflict in fragile states. This inquiry provides an opportunity for Australia to further strengthen its position as the partner of choice in the Indo-Pacific and provide effective aid that helps to prevent conflict and builds community resilience. IOM stands ready to continue partnering with the Australian Government and other stakeholders to share programmatic expertise on peacebuilding, conflict prevention and migration management, in line with its global efforts to promote safe, orderly and regular migration that upholds the dignity and rights of all migrants.

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<sup>33</sup> Campbell, J, *Climate Change, Migration and Land in Oceania*, (Toda Peace Institute, 2024)

<sup>34</sup> IOM, *Regional Report on the Transhumance Tracking Tool in West and Central Africa*, (IOM, 2024)