

# Supporting development in former war zones



ECOSOC

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**Issue:** Supporting development in former war zones

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## Introduction

War is a devastating subject with devastating consequences. Said consequences can be clearly seen in previously war-stricken areas as after wars, these areas tend to be financially and environmentally ruined. In recent years, there have been a number of wars wrecking through geopolitical areas which have left them nonfunctional and inhabitable. The ruined land has led to the subject of war tourism, a dangerous form of tourism as unexploded ordnances may cause injury, or even death, well after wars. Many countries are subject to such phenomena and war shows its face although it may seem over. These countries still have human rights violations as a result of the war and such violations must be resolved for the longevity of peace and development. Countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya have been victims of such post-war environments. Not only that, but it can be clearly seen that war has its long-lasting effects in countries such as Vietnam.

## Definition of Key Terms

### War Tourism

War tourism is a form of tourism focused on visiting current or past areas of conflict for the purpose of sightseeing or historical exploration. Sightseeing in such areas has its dangers as there are UXOs or other phenomena that can be a danger for human life.

### Unexploded Ordnance

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) refers to ammunition that has been discharged but failed to detonate as intended. These ordnances can stay on the battlefield without setting off for years. Such ammunition may explode at unexpected times, killing innocent civilians.

### Demining

In the military demining process, the goal is to swiftly eliminate a minefield through forceful methods, typically with an accepted clearance rate ranging from 80% to 90%.

## Coping Strategy

Coping Strategy is actions that are taken (or a plan that is devised) that are aimed at addressing challenges, solving difficulties and guaranteeing a person's or a collective's well-being. Generally, it includes goals, values and priorities with a plan of action. It can have both long and medium-term perspectives.

## General Overview

In the state of post-war, states tend to be financially and geographically ruined. This is why NGOs such as the IMF and Toxic Remnants of War Project were created. These NGOs help countries that are devastated in every way and help them get back on their feet.

In recent years, countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and Libya were ruined because of conflicts, civil wars and riots. Considering that said countries have not yet recovered from the ashes of war and are still in desperate need of help. They are in need of both political and financial reforms.

The development of such areas is a necessity as their economic and sociological grounds are fundamental for the development of a country as a whole. Not only that, but unexploded ordnances may cause unintended consequences to the population. Agriculture, commercial usage and industrial utilization in these areas are very difficult without developing them first. Not to forget the population that has been exiled from their home because of the war. Reintegrating this exiled population into the area is a must for the area's economic and political longevity. In addition to this, developing such areas may prevent further conflicts. Disregarding such coping strategies might mean that a country must experience the long-term effects of war, even though these effects aren't necessary. For example:

### Iraq after American occupation

For starters, if we take a look at Iraq, the state has been devastated because of American occupation which has caused a civil war with ISIS, a jihadi terrorist organization. Such events have caused the country to go into turmoil.

Over 300,000 Iraqis died which has decreased the workforce of the country exponentially. Even after the occupation, Iraq has been a hotspot for terrorist activity. ISIS, other Shia organizations

and Kurdish forces have fought in the capital, Bagdad for over 14 years. War in this grand scheme has caused environmental catastrophe.

Iraq is a very good example, because it is one of the few countries that has been able to make changes in order to develop their economy ever since its civil war, especially considering that Iraq is a middle eastern country. If one focuses their attention on countries such as Syria and Yemen, it would be clear that such countries have not been able to recover from their own conflicts and still have political and ideological conflicts that turn into armed conflicts.

However, questions of security and economic problems are still a burden to the country of Iraq, even though they may have been slowly resolving such problems themselves over the past few years. If we take a look at the negative experience index:

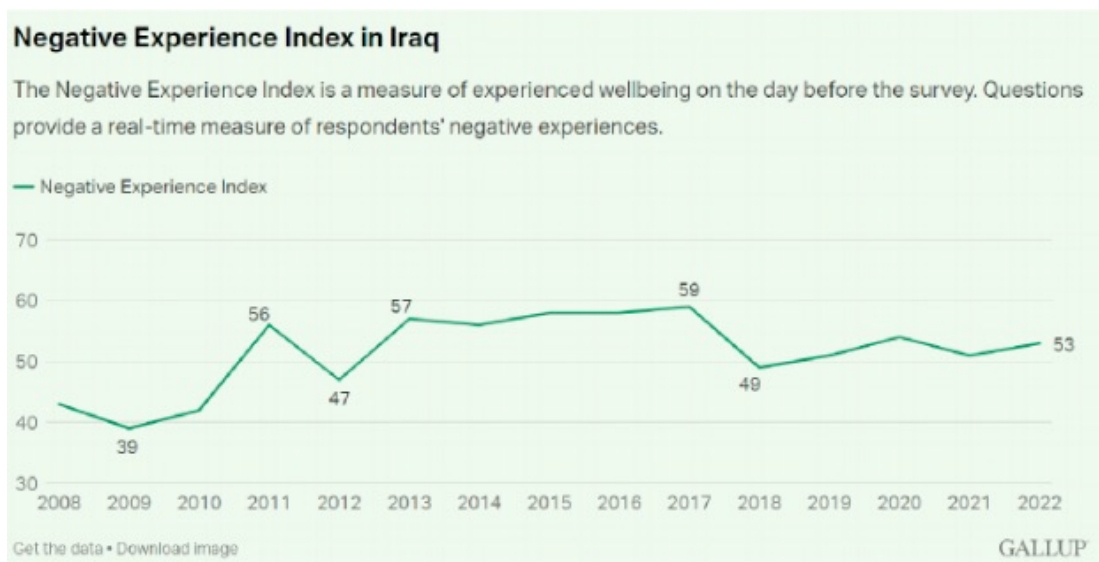


Figure 1: Negative experience index provided by Gallup.

It can be concluded that it has stayed somewhat constant after the war which means that although there is some progress, there is still a long way to go in order to have solidarity and peace in the country of Iraq. So, having the proper coping strategies (such as working with the IMF to make steps in the way of financial growth, working with the UN and other NGOs in order to solve human rights violations etc.) may help this country that has been at war for a very long time, get better and better each year.

### Afghanistan under Islamic control

It was only a matter of time the Taliban took control of the state of Afghanistan after America pulled its troops from Afghan soil. After the country's long-lasting America-backed civil war, Afghanistan was left in devastation. Not only that, but Islamic control under the terrorist organization Taliban has caused serious human rights concerns as women are discriminated in the country. Amnesty International has reported that such discrimination may decrease the GDP of the country by 5%. On top of that, the economic consequences of such a regime are already observable, as the country's economy has gone down by 30% since the takeover. In order to develop a country like Afghanistan, there must first be serious reforms in human rights, politics and the economy. As of now, Afghanistan is not developing and during the time of The Taliban, it would seem like there wouldn't be any further updates. However, a phenomenon that is interesting is Afghanistan's illegal opium trade has gone down by 95% ever since the take-over, this means that Taliban is enforcing anti-drug policies that get in the way of such trade, but this does not mean that The Taliban is in the right direction in the grand journey of development. Such a development would be only possible if Afghanistan changed its politics and opted for a more inclusive environment.

### Libya after Gaddafi

Libya went through its first civil war in 2011 with Muammar Gaddafi, an Islamic Socialist with extreme policies. Gaddafi took power by a coup d'état, he was a socialist dictator who had unpredictable foreign policies, however, the people of Libya had financial stability because of Libya's oil-rich geography. However, in 2011, in light of the Arab Spring, Libya had a NATO-backed revolution against Gaddafi, which resulted in NATO victory. After such victory, one would expect the country to develop, as a socialist dictator regime was replaced with a democratic one, however, Gaddafi had such a hold in the country that his death led the state into turmoil. Following his death, there was another civil war that ended in 2020. On top of that, the long-lasting Libyan Crisis has portrayed a true anarchy in the country of Libya. Of course, this turmoil affected the country as oil production in Libya dropped exponentially.

Figure 2. Crude oil production in Libya, January 2010 to December 2021



Figure 2: Libya's crude oil production over the years, provided by the U.S Energy Information Administration.

This drop and Libya's efforts to get back on track are all visible in the chart above. To develop such a country, one must make sure that the government is stable and functioning as well as making sure that it has the right workforce to further develop such a deteriorated economy. After Gaddafi, this may be difficult, as he had a big grasp over the country however, it is not impossible.

### Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya: a conclusion

These countries all had their share of civil wars and revolutions. Keeping in mind that these are just examples to facilitate the observation of after-war effects as considerably, these are countries that such effects project themselves the most. Something that has not been mentioned in previous subheadings is refugees. These countries also took hits sociologically. These people have sought refuge in European and Asian countries, which has significantly decreased the workforce of their home countries and split up entire families. This is another reason for development and probably the most important reason of them all. Everybody must have the right to live in their home country without the worry of an unsafe environment. This is why working with NGOs such as the IMF, the UN and Amnesty International is a must in order to make these countries open up to foreign relations, global economic trade and proper human rights laws. Such work with NGOs must ensure the development of not just the countries above but all war-stricken countries.

### An overview on the rest of the world

A grand majority of this general overview has been on the conflicts and problems of the Middle East as it has had the most mainstream attention. However, there are countries outside the Middle East such as Russia and Ukraine. Although the Russo-Ukrainian war is still ongoing, there is approximately 151.2 billion dollars worth of infrastructural damage done to the Ukrainian front. Regarding this damage, it can cause famines, health issues due to the lack of hospitals or roads, human rights violations as without proper infrastructure, governments would have limited means of authority. These are all problems of the post-war world.

A war that has long-passed however has its effects to this very day is Vietnam. After America pulled its troops from Vietnam, the country was devastated. Said devastation is still present as corruption was at an all-time high in the country in 2014. It is said that “for every 10 dollars assigned to a government project, 7 dollars is going into someone else’s pocket.” But the future's not so grim for the country of Vietnam as corruption has had a significant decrease in the last 5 years.



Figure 3: Corruption index in Vietnam from 2014 to 2023.

### War tourism, unexploded ordnances and demining

War tourism is a type of tourism that has risen in popularity throughout the years. Although such tourism isn't as popular in areas that are still at risk of war, people have been visiting battlefields left from the American Civil War, World War I and World War II. If not properly managed, these areas can be dangerous as there are unexploded ordnances such as grenades, missiles and more likely, land mines. These ordnances can be set off by any civilian oblivious to the danger that they are in. This is

why managing such areas is a must. Governments must work in unison to demine these unexploded ordnances and to ensure peace in the area. Even if war tourism was out of the question, there are still civilians who live in active or former war zones that can set off these dangerous unexploded ordnances. A country that was mentioned, Afghanistan, had the most reported landmine and unexploded ordnance casualties in the world between 2000 and 2001. There are approximately between 7 million and 8 million landmines in Afghanistan, with most of them being planted during the Soviet occupation between 1978 and 1989. There was an average of 102 injuries caused by UXOs monthly in Afghanistan between the years 2000 and 2001. Forty-six percent of the injured were children under the age of 16. Considering that this is only the country of Afghanistan between the years 2000 and 2001, there may be a lot more recorded or not recorded incidents like this. This is a more than enough reason to advocate for demining procedures of former war areas that are developing.

## Major Parties Involved

### Toxic Remnants of War Project

The Toxic Remnants of War Project is a coalition of civil society organizations dedicated to minimizing the humanitarian and environmental consequences of pollution resulting from military and conflict-related activities. This project is part of UNEP (The United Nations Environment Program). The project is an advocate for the establishment of more robust standards for environmental and civilian protection throughout all phases of armed conflicts. This project is necessary in order to clean up war-torn areas after conflicts.

### International Monetary Fund

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a fund that is an advocate for financial policies that are detrimental to the economic growth of a state. This fund provides much-needed resources that support productivity, create employment and improve economic welfare which in advance boosts the speed of development of a country. World War II was a direct creator of this fund as it was created in order to ensure countries that took economic hits got back on track after the war.

### Amnesty International

Amnesty International is an NGO that aims to help the cause of human rights globally. They conduct research that observes human rights violations. This NGO is important, as post-war countries



tend to have human rights violations. Such violations block the process of development and in extreme cases may cause other conflicts.

### United Nations Peacekeeping

United Nations Peacekeepers are a UN-backed army and police force. Its primary focus is making sure that an area is ensured peace after a conflict or, in areas where tensions are high. This NGO is important for making sure that an area after war keeps its peaceful state.

### Possible Solutions

There are a bunch of problems to be solved such as reconfiguring the damaged land, housing, the abolition of UXOs, stopping further conflicts and financial recovery. These problems can be solved in participation with companies that specialize in such financial and architectural categories. However, in order to solve further conflicts, there has to be peacekeeping and this calls for political reforms, not only for peacekeeping, but also for the insurance of proper human rights. United Nations Peacekeeping forces may be crucial for keeping peace in such areas.

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