



Mediation in Regionalized Conflicts: Lessons from Recent Peace Processes

Project Overview

Summary

This project focuses on international mediation in intra-state conflicts that have significant regional conflict dimensions. The problem of conflict regionalization arises most acutely where neighboring states provide military support to domestic conflict parties and may even be involved in hostilities. These dynamics constitute a worrying trend because they tend to make the conflicts more protracted and less amenable to resolution through mediation.

The project is led by the [Peace Research Institute Oslo](#) (PRIO) and the [Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies](#) at the [University of Notre Dame](#). It is supported by the Cross-border Conflict, Evidence, Policy and Trends ([XCEPT](#)) research program, funded by [UK International Development](#).

Focus

This project will be based on original case studies as well as reviews of the relevant literature. The case studies will cover conflict and peace processes in Afghanistan (2018-2021); Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2003); the 1991 Madrid Conference on the Israel-Palestine conflict; South Sudan (2013-2015); the Minsk process on the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2014-2015); and Yemen (2015-2023).

Case study research questions

- In what ways was the conflict regionalized?
- How did the regionalization of the conflict affect mediation efforts?
- How did the mediators address, or fail to address, the regionalization of the conflict?
- Were there gaps and tensions between the regional dynamics of the *conflict* and the design and dynamics of the *mediation*?
- What were the *effects* of the mediator's approach to the regionalization of the conflict?



1991 Madrid Conference on Israel-Palestine conflict

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Why it matters

When conflicts are regionalized, mediators are confronted with a more complex and difficult political environment. They must engage with both the domestic parties and their regional backers and must attempt to manage and balance a greater number of objectives, agendas, interests and power dynamics.

The international mediation community is therefore interested in drawing lessons from peacemaking experiences in regionalized conflict. They want to know how best to include external actors in peace processes; whether external and domestic mediation efforts should take place concurrently or sequentially; who is best placed to mediate the regional conflict dimensions; and what substantive regional issues should be included in peace agreements.

Research outputs

- Six case studies
- A policy paper with lessons for the mediation community
- A scholarly article that will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal
- A closed roundtable convened in London in early 2025
- A public seminar held in London in early 2025.

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