

Transitional justice and peace building:
Diagnosing and addressing the socioeconomic
roots of violence through a human rights
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Transitional Justice and Peace Building: Diagnosing and Addressing the Socioeconomic Roots of Violence through a Human Rights Framework

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Abstract

¹ Increasing numbers of violent street protests and riots caused by socioeconomic grievances often occur in countries whose truth commissions have studied similar past episodes of violence and repression. These new cycles of violence push us to ask what more transitional justice can do to promote the aims of reconciliation and sustainable peace. The author proposes that truth commissions expand their mandates to include a legal framework that examines the socioeconomic root causes of violence in terms of violations of economic, social and cultural rights. This approach would help increase the compulsion felt by states to redress these conditions, and at the same time would provide local actors with a legitimate platform to lobby for solutions to their grievances. She argues that if the underlying socioeconomic structures that lead to violence are not addressed, sustainable peace will remain beyond our reach. In this way, the proposal supports the development– security nexus paradigm adopted in the last decade in UN peace–building operations. To complement this work, truth commissions could contribute to postconflict recovery first by diagnosing the socioeconomic causes of conflict and then by issuing recommendations that would orient national political agendas toward addressing poverty and structural inequalities, namely through the promotion of sustainable development.

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