

security at the most grassroots level. This suggests the need to complement the policies and practices of state-building with city-building in order to efficiently build a state's capacity – through its cities – to protect its citizens.

Urban centres often have a greater capacity to rebuild following conflicts and thus project an image of recovery and peace that can build confidence in larger peace processes. Sarajevo suffered four years of siege by Serbian forces in the 1990s, with 11,000 deaths. However, the city has since been rebuilt, with ethnic inter-marriages and inter-group youth collaboration again the norm. The rebirth of Sarajevo has served as a source of symbolic and practical peacebuilding for Bosnians.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Kabul regained its cosmopolitan nature soon after the Afghanistan war, and is undoubtedly the most secure area in Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup>

In one example of peacebuilding via city-to-city diplomacy, the local governments of Tuzla (Bosnia), Osijek (Croatia), and Novisad (Serbia) worked together – and in conjunction with civil society groups – during the Balkan wars to protect and conserve their multi-ethnic societies. In the post-war period, the three cities contributed to the peace process at the local level by signing a *Protocol on the Promotion of Interethnic Tolerance*.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, local city councils in the region of North Cauca, Colombia, have banded together to resist the conflict between the Colombian state and insurgent groups. In this they were supported by several visits from mayors of European cities, demonstrating the solidarity and symbolic support that cities can give one another.

The value of conflict-resilient cities in bolstering human security and contributing to peace and security objectives is gradually being acknowledged. There are a number of organizations that are working on this topic, such as United Cities and Local Governments, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Dutch NGO VNG International. These groups have supported citizen participation and city diplomacy efforts in urban centres in South Africa, Iran, Uganda, Serbia, and elsewhere. For the most part, however, few international peacebuilding efforts by large organizations have explicitly targeted strengthened urban resilience as a key conflict prevention tool.

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<sup>57</sup> "Sarajevo finds love after the war," BBC, February 28, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> "Good times roll in city where fun was banned," *The Times*, March 15, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> See <http://www.citizenspact.org.yu/protocol.htm>.