

arena for early and immediate intervention in post-war situations. Lessons learned from previous UN peacebuilding missions reveal that failure to develop local-level democracy frustrates the pursuit of security and hampers service delivery. Where municipal-level governance is democratic and where there is community involvement in decision making, security, relief, and development, those activities are more likely to be sustainable over time.

Broadly speaking, local-level politicians say they have more in common in terms of responsibilities to their cities than they do in terms of their political party lines. The local level forces authorities to focus on priorities rather than politics in many cases.

It may be possible to city-build (as a complement to state-building) only in small cities. As one respondent noted:

*It is my experience in several peacekeeping missions that in only small cities, with some recent history of internal cooperation, and some strict and consistent security support is such post-conflict progress imaginable.*

The Balkan triad is one such example, but the failure of Sarajevo, Dili, and Nicosia in the early stages of those conflicts suggests that current expectations for city-building should be modest indeed.

In post-conflict environments, city-building must begin immediately. However, as warlords and other elites may be strongest in the post-conflict period, elections may not be the outcome of city-building. Rather, we need to look at other types of local-level democracy that build civil society in conjunction with national elections. Nonetheless, local elections are an excellent way to inculcate the principles of democracy, and should be held as soon as circumstances allow.

**With cities being the level of government closest to the people, should reconstruction efforts look to build democracy and governance institutions from the ground up?**

As one expert noted, "Very often the physical, social, economic, and cultural dynamics of cities recover remarkably quickly once the mass violence stops."

However, ineffective and unrepresentative local government that cannot provide basic urban services leaves a vacuum that can be filled by