Guyana 2003-15

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This case study is part of a broader research project, carried out by the UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) with the support of the UK Mission to the United Nations, on the role of UN Resident Coordinators in Conflict Prevention. The project aimed to extract lessons from case studies of Resident Coordinator-supported preventive action in nine countries (Bolivia 2000-09; Colombia 2012-16; Guinea 2009-15; Guyana 2003-15; Kenya 2008-17; Kyrgyzstan 2010-17; Malawi, 2011-17; Nepal 2007-15; and Tunisia 2011-17). All case studies, and the resulting policy paper synthesizing lessons and findings can be accessed at cpr.unu.edu.

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Introduction

Following highly contested national elections in 2001, politically- and racially-charged violence swept across Guyana’s capital, Georgetown, and the surrounding countryside. The crisis revealed deep social cleavages and weak governance capacities, with many warning that the country was nearing the point of state failure. Although the UN had been present in Guyana for decades, its focus on social and economic development meant the Organization had little political engagement when the crisis broke out. The UN had to shift quickly from a purely development-oriented approach to a conflict prevention role.

This case study explores the UN Resident Coordinator-led response to the crisis in Guyana, in particular the efforts to end the immediate risks of widespread violence following the 2001 elections, while also working to address the deeper root causes of conflict. It focuses on key moments in the UN’s preventive engagement from 2003-15, identifying how the consecutive Resident Coordinators (RCs) during this period – Richard Olver (1999-2002), Jan Sand Sorensen (2003-04), Youssif Mahmoud (2004-06), Aboubacry Tall (2007-09), Mamadou Kiarı Liman–Tinguiri (2009-11), and Khadija Musa (2012-16) – developed and implemented conflict prevention strategies and initiatives. It especially focuses on the UN’s national Social Cohesion Programme (SCP) (2003 – 06) that led a pivotal ‘national conversation’ among Guyanese citizens about community identity and inter-racial harmony, leading, in 2006, to Guyana’s first completely violence-free elections in its history.

The SCP’s implementation proved catalytic, leaving a lasting legacy among Guyanese society of relative inter-ethnic harmony, even if it would take longer for deeper institutional and governance reforms to take hold. Importantly, the program was built on citizens’ direct participation, helping to impart social norms of non-violence and social unity, which ultimately contributed to a shift in prevailing views about community and inter-ethnic identity. Successor programs to the SCP strengthened community security and local capacities further, evidenced by peaceful elections in 2011 and 2015, again with support from the RC and UN Country Team (UNCT). This paper explores how UN Resident Coordinator-led responses directly contributed to these changes and made a significant contribution to conflict prevention in Guyana.

Guyana was an early test case for UN interagency cooperation on conflict prevention outside of mission settings and remains a compelling illustration of the impact that limited, strategically deployed prevention resources can have at the right place and time.

1. Country Context

“The story of Guyana is, to a deeply disturbing degree, the story of political exploitation of the race factor by every political leader from every point on the ideological spectrum.”

The root causes of Guyana’s persistent violence can be traced back to historical competition between its two predominant racial groups – Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese – over resources and political power. Politicians’ incitement of racial divisions during electoral periods have preyed on fears of ethnically-based dominance, and have reliably sparked violence for decades. In the absence of strong accountability or justice institutions in the country, and in the face of deep economic and social marginalization, violence has been an all-too typical means to a political end in Guyana. A brief description of the sources of these tensions provides important context for the 2002 crisis.

Colonial legacy and inequality

As a Caribbean country with a population of less than 800,000, Guyana’s demographic composition, and the political exploitation of it, is a primary cause of its instability. Guyana’s history of racially-defined politics has its roots in the period of British colonial rule in the 19th century. In 1838, Great Britain’s abolition of slavery caused a mass exodus from plantations when former slaves moved to the coast, creating settlements of small farms and triggering a labour shortage, which was filled by imported indentured workers, mostly from India. These newcomers from India were resented and viewed as strike-breakers for accepting British low wages.

Ethnically divisive “divide-and-rule” colonial policies prescribed a strict social hierarchy and division of roles within the plantation economy. Afro-Guyanese, descendants from African slaves, educated in Christian schools converted to the faith, entered civil service roles, industry and business in urban areas. In contrast, East Indians, descendants of indentured labourers from the Indian subcontinent, were excluded from schools at the time, settling in rural areas to become tradesmen or rice and sugar farmers. Segregation deepened across economic and social spheres, with trade and labour unions dominated by either group, permanently bifurcating civil society in wholly separate identities. From these separate foundations, ethnically-based political parties emerged to lead the independence movement to end British rule.

The independence movement and the politics as a struggle for ethnic survival

Starting from the independence movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, ethnic solidarity drove political mobilization with “vote for your own” rallying cries that cultivated and reinforced entrenched negative stereotypes and fear of the other. Political movements were born of and catalysed this polarization. Guyana’s winner-takes-all political system – defined by communal loyalty politics and without meaningful power-sharing arrangements – further fuelled ethnic tension and fears. Such fears were systematically manipulated with
racially-charged rhetoric during volatile election periods, including through highly-biased media outlets, in order to mobilize the bases.

The violence that characterises this period also derives from the lack of a national-level dialogue or reconciliation following decades of slavery, colonial rule and ethnically-based policies. At each new electoral process, the prospects for national unity and/or social cohesion retreated further, as identity-politics and mutual distrust instead drove political agendas. Neither side saw political advantage in adopting policies that would build accountability or inter-communal dialogue, which was reflected in the total lack of institutions at the state or local level that could advance reconciliation. In the absence of any power-sharing or conciliation systems within a highly centralized national governance structure, the political motivation of each side has historically been to acquire power and hold onto it at all costs.5

Successive elections trigger inter-ethnic tensions

From its independence in 1966 until 2001, Guyana’s electoral cycles reliably triggered tensions among the two leading ethnic groups. This occurred primarily between two groups: Indo-Guyanese supporting the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) and Afro-Guyanese supporters of the People’s National Congress (PNC). The Indo-Guyanese were the majority ethnic group (43% per 2002 census), with the Afro-Guyanese the second largest (30.2%).4 Smaller ethnic groups of mixed-race and indigenous Amerindians, marginalized under colonial rule, were politically powerless, except as a “swing” vote upon which the two main parties occasionally depended.

From 1968 to 1992, the PNC ruled on the basis of a quasi-socialist agenda, nationalizing industries to favour its own patronage networks and using the security services to suppress dissent and target opponents.7 This led to deep resentment among the PPP and its supporters. The 1992 elections took place amidst riots, targeted assassinations and ethnically-charged political violence. Following their 1992 victory, the PPP put in place equally discriminatory policies that fed further polarization in the country. Again, following the 1997 contested electoral results, there were weeks of riots in Georgetown and environs, with both sides fuelling violence. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) intervened at the time to mediate a peace agreement, which included provisions for new elections in 2001, and electoral reforms that criminalised racially-charged/hate speech.8 A subsequent agreement between the two sides was meant to accelerate deeper constitutional reforms focused on power-sharing, but slow and inadequate implementation meant that by 2000 there were few incentives for the parties to cooperate. International organizations including CARICOM, the Commonwealth of Nations and the Carter Center were brought in on several occasions between 1992 and 2001 to help resolve outstanding political disputes, with little success.9

The 2001 elections were deeply polarizing, in part because the many complaints by the PNC about the 1997 electoral process had not been addressed. Public suspicion about the voter registry was unresolved, while international election observers cited widespread irregularities in both registration and dissemination of results.10 The narrow victory by the PPP was strongly contested by the PNC and its supporters, with the PNC eventually boycotting Parliament. A failed mediation by the Commonwealth Secretariat between President Bharrat Jagdeo and the former (PNC) President Desmond Hoyte was followed by violent protests and the storming of the President’s offices.11 Sporadic street violence continued through 2001 and into 2002, with increasingly clear signs of inter-ethnic factors driving attacks.

The crisis reached a boiling point in early 2002 when between 200-400 civilians were reported killed amidst allegations of state-sponsored, extra-judicial killings by criminal groups across the country.12 The military was called in to maintain public order, but with widespread resentment against the state – particularly among PNC supporters – and a deeply polarized government, tensions continued to mount and violence continued. In July, a CARICOM conference in Georgetown brought international media attention to the country, as the World Bank declared Guyana to be suffering from a “crisis of governance” and many international stakeholders warning that it could become a failed state.13

The following section describes how UN Resident Coordinator-supported action – largely focused on development and socio-economic issues in Guyana – put in place a consultative conflict prevention approach for the country in the face of this crisis.

2. RC-Supported Prevention Initiatives

This section examines the UN Resident Coordinator’s role in conflict prevention efforts in Guyana in the period between 2003 and 2015, with the focus on the 2003-06 UN-led Social Cohesion Program, which catalyzed transformational change in Guyanese society, breaking a decades-long cycle of violent national elections.

Context: The UN in Guyana prior to 2003

With a light footprint and long commitment, a handful of UN agencies have been supporting Guyana’s development since 1952. Few entry points existed for the UN to engage in politically-driven prevention work outside of building capacity of the election commission. However, this changed in July 2002, when the outbreak of major violence created an entry point for conflict prevention work in Guyana.14

At the time, RC Richard Olver was concluding his three-year tenure in Guyana, but before leaving indicated that the UN stood ready to lend support to national dialogue and peacebuilding if there was political will by the parties, declaring that Guyanans needed to “reach across the divide” and calling for “a whole series of measures to help build trust
in this society.” Specifically, he suggested to build on the grassroots work of the United Nations Association of Guyana (UNAG) in establishing Community Peace Councils as local mediation and dialogue mechanisms. This was a clear signal by the UN that it was ready to help the Guyanese through their crisis and the first overt entry point for the UN into a conflict prevention role. Unfortunately, it would take the UN more than a year to replace Olver after he departed in the spring of 2002.

**Genesis of the UN’s Conflict Prevention Strategy in Guyana**

**Conflict analysis, joint capacity and early setbacks**

In 2002, without an RC on the ground, the UNDP Resident Representative, as acting RC, led consultations with the Carter Center and the Commonwealth Secretariat on how best to respond to the crisis, with guidance from UNDP and DPA in New York. In December 2002, in support of this effort, an inter-agency team from UN Headquarters embarked on a joint needs assessment mission to Guyana. They conducted an analysis of the risks of continued unrest and future electoral violence. The mission defined four major challenges: 1) political deadlock between the parties over failure to implement previous accords and their withdrawal from mediation efforts; 2) increase in violence among poor, disaffected communities coupled with political discontent, and leading to state security forces abuses and extrajudicial killings; 3) weak government capacity to deliver basic public services “suggesting possible state failure;” and 4) heightened acrimony and racially polarized public discourse, compounded by biased, inflammatory media coverage.

The team’s analysis confirmed UNDP Guyana’s concerns of the existential threat this volatility posed for Guyana’s stability if left unaddressed. Recommendations emerging from this mission led to a decision by the UN’s since-disbanded Interagency Framework for Coordination on Early Warning and Preventive Action (aka “the Framework Team”) to directly support conflict prevention in Guyana with specific staff capacities, funding, and inter-agency guidance for a program that would later become the Social Cohesion Programme. Abandoning the status quo, a view emerged from within the UN that it was ready to help the Guyanese through mediation and dialogue mechanisms. At the same time, as the country descended into violence, several citizen’s groups driven by public sentiments that political elites were failing the Guyanese, inserted themselves into the public dialogue to break the impasse and advocate for reconciliation and a cessation of violence. However, the groups, too, were viewed as partisan, and the effort fell apart.

Despite these challenges, and further to the Framework Team’s commitment of support, the UN on the ground took preparatory steps to build its own capacity to take forward the work if the opportunity arose, including the deployment by UNDP and DPA of an experienced Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) – the first deployment of a PDA ever – and a Human Rights Advisor to Georgetown. A Program Management Unit (PMU) was established as a joint capacity between UNDP and the RC’s Office to begin work on designing a prevention program. Between December 2002 and May 2003, in close collaboration with the UN core team in New York, they developed an inter-agency programme based on the analysis of the joint mission, with the PDA leading the programme design with a conflict prevention orientation. However, in doing so they operated within tight constraints set by the government at the time. Indeed, the government prohibited use of the word “conflict” and blocked any overt attempts at prevention or governance capacity strengthening.

As a result, the small prevention team within UNDP’s PMU used the very small entry point they had, namely HIV training, as a way to get a foothold into working with government institutions on prevention. This included, initially all in the HIV context, leadership training with elements of ‘emotional intelligence’ which began to carefully introduce themes such as mutual respect. With this foothold, they began to introduce more deliberately, discussions around acceptance of diversity and issues related to inter-ethnic co-existence. Later, this approach was also adopted in their technical support to the Elections Commission.

**Defining the RC role: Program setbacks and lessons in diplomacy**

In June 2003, the deployment of a new RC, Jan Sand Sorensen, brought initial progress but also introduced a new set of obstacles and delays in the UN’s support to conflict prevention in Guyana. Among his first priorities was to implement the multi-dimensional program the joint PMU team had developed with the aim of de-escalating tensions and enhancing social cohesion. A Danish national and former RC in Latvia with an ILO background, Sorensen set up a Thematic Group on Peace and Social Cohesion with UNCT members as well as local and international stakeholders to oversee implementation of the UN’s nascent Social Cohesion Programme. Abandoning the status quo, a view began emerging from within the UN that rather than trying...
to mediate a solution, it would help create the space and capacities for Guyanese to play this role themselves. With increased donor interest in Guyana and an enhanced UN role therein, the RC came to co-chair with the Guyanese President the High-Level Donor Committee and its subsidiary Thematic Group on Governance. This opened high-level political channels and the possibility of greater access for prevention-related programming for the UN.

But this high-level initiative also increased Sorensen’s own public profile and left him vulnerable in a highly charged political atmosphere. With so-called “death squads” continuing to perpetrate serious violence on civilians, and widespread suspicions that these groups were acting with at least tacit support from the government, European ambassadors based in Georgetown pressured Sorensen to issue a joint statement on behalf of the “international community”. This was the first joint international statement, and it condemned state-sponsored violence, human rights abuses and political incitement.

This statement created a huge rift between the RC and the Government. President Jagdeo responded to it by writing a no-confidence letter to the UN Secretary-General, taking advantage of Guyana’s “active presence and visible profile” in New York. UN leadership in NY responded by sending a fact-finding mission to Guyana and Sorenson was left with little political leverage for the remaining six months of his term.

Social Cohesion as a Conflict Prevention Strategy

With the RC still in country but effectively made a lame duck, the joint UN-PMU team was nonetheless able to continue with “low-profile” training on conflict prevention, early warning, and conflict-sensitive development programming led by the PDA, as well as human rights training led by the Human Rights Advisor. There was no political engagement between the UN and the government for many months while the PMU quietly led “track II or III” engagement to develop the SCP. Eventually, the UN became seen as a useful ally to the government, able to use its neutrality to manage the various programs in a way that would not disrupt the fragile ethnic/political balance in Guyana. And the government saw the UN as a source of support too: capable of mobilizing funding for public programs, development and election support, it was a key ally in the efforts to acquire and sustain funding. As a result, the UN-led Social Cohesion Program (SCP) became the preferred channel for all conflict prevention programs.

A New Theory of Change Emerges

The deployment of a PDA and its new focus on conflict prevention allowed the UN to update what was widely considered a poor and outdated Common Country Assessment (CCA). The PDA, South African conflict resolution specialist Chris Spies, led a new, widely consulted conflict analysis which summarized Guyana’s core challenges as consisting of weak and non-inclusive governance, poor leadership, racial identity politics, inequality and poverty, pervasive mistrust between groups, and a legacy of historical grievances.

The PDA concluded that perennial, high-stakes power struggles, meant that political opponents rarely cooperated; and “yet all of them spoke about the need for cohesion and prosperity.” At the core of Guyana’s conflict, and its single biggest hurdle for peace and stability, was a fundamental trust deficit between the two prominent ethnic groups. Therefore, building confidence between these groups was the key to prevention in Guyana. It required Guyanese citizens outside the political arena to take the first steps, and in doing so, reclaim ownership of their destiny. If a safe space for an honest exchange of views, without fear of reprisal, could be found, then civil society could “find its own voice in the national dialogue” and begin holding their politicians, and each other, accountable.

It was from this premise that a new theory of change emerged, one aimed not at mediation, but deeper “conflict transformation.” Reckoning with the failures of elite mediation in which political dialogue excluded the general population, this approach would be inclusive, bottom-up and organic. It would define, for the first time, a role for regular citizens in influencing Guyana’s path. With a focus on individual human relationships within the conflict rather than its structural causal factors, it constituted a novel effort to build national capacities for peace and justice in tandem.

Citizen dialogue and creating conditions for peace to ‘erupt’

In its convening role, the UN helped create these safe spaces for Guyanese to open meaningful channels of dialogue, on the basis of which trust could be built. The deliberate avoidance of specific outcomes or closure was by design, since its very informality was seen as essential to fostering cooperation.
Comparing the new approach with the previous one, Chris Spies noted that “before May 2003, dialogue attempts focused on the issue of negotiation – “talk to each other because you have to!” – in order to avoid chaos and implosion.” This was mainly done through external mediation attempts. By contrast, the SCP shifted to enabling the conditions in which dialogue could occur – “talk to each other because you want to” – as a “logical and safe thing to do.” The model offered a path from social fragmentation to cohesion, but with a built-in agility that does not dictate that the path is sequential. Spies based the Social Cohesion Project design on a proven model (Development Practice Framework) adapted from Community Development Resources Association, a South African NGO advancing inclusive community dialogue for social change.

The Social Cohesion Project was managed by the RC’s conflict prevention team, led by Chris Spies (his PDA), and including conflict experts and specialized UNDP program staff, in particular Lawrence Lachmansingh, a UNDP national programme staff who proved key to the program’s success. Under the RC’s direct supervision and support, the PDA led the six-month design of the programme (December 2002 – May 2003) through its three-year implementation (May 2003 – December 2006). They assembled an ethnically mixed team, recruiting local residents with a background in youth work with regional development councils.

The SCP is noteworthy for several reasons: 1) the inclusivity of its scope (including dismantling racial bias and reclaiming civic voices and roles); 2) its focus on building trust as a means of “humanizing” each other; 3) its local ownership with Guyanese driving the agenda; and 4) the efficacy of its strategy to network disparate segments of Guyanese society across its racial divisions (E.g. Guyana Peace Builders Network). It employed a comprehensive range of techniques and activities designed for maximum impact and inclusion.

The fact that the SCP’s approach aligned with the widely held Guyanese view that durable peace would not come without justice, equity and development motivated broad participation in the process, as did the strong demand for safe spaces to talk to one another, to air grievances, reconcile with past injustices, and begin to trust again.

Without a specific pre-determined outcome, a series of stakeholder dialogue forums in informal, small-groups allowed people to listen to one another in a context of mutual respect, from which relationships of trust emerged organically. The forums gave voice to a multitude of stakeholders. Technical skills in mediation, peacebuilding, early warning, human rights, peace education and conflict transformation were imparted through workshops, trainings, study tours and trips abroad. Participants then launched their own initiatives as a multiplier effect dispersed their impact throughout the country.

### Overview of select SCP activities (2003-06)

#### Efforts to promote dialogue:
In the lead up to 2006 elections, the most significant of the SCP’s efforts was a bottom-up dialogue space created through Multi-Stakeholder Forums (MSFs) and National Conversation, engaging broad cross-segments of civil society (citizens, community leaders, politicians). MSFs tailored to specific groups – youth, women, religious leaders – and local regions, became most well-known features of the program.

#### Efforts to build national conflict management capacity:
This set of activities focused on developing the conflict management capacity of local governance institutions and other important constituency by providing training to police, the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC), Regional Development Councils, youth groups, trade unions, community organizations, and political party leaders.

#### Media training and support:
In 2004, UNDP led consultations among journalists, editors and others in media, supported drafting responsible broadcasting legislation, helped design responsible journalism courses at Guyanese Universities.

#### Peace Research and Education:
In the framework of the SCP, the UN, in 2004, convened national peace scholars, politicians and civic leaders in a national conflict analysis, resolution and governance conference, embedding conflict prevention awareness in the national higher education curriculum.

#### Youth participation and local ownership:
The SCP’s Youth-Focused Community Based Initiatives targeted unemployed, out-of-school, “unattached” youth, often involved in violence and crime, in small funded and mentored community projects in violence-prone regions.
Youth wings of the two political parties met in workshops; groups of youth and local officials participated in conflict transformation, civic education and human rights workshops. These youth returned to lead development projects in their own communities building skills training or recreational centres, libraries, and bridges.

During this period, mediation was not abandoned. A Special Envoy to Guyana of the Commonwealth, Sir Paul Reeves, was facilitating “track one” political dialogue throughout the tense electoral and volatile periods between 2002 and 2006, positioning the UN to lead in the “track two” space.

By the end of 2004, a new RC, Youssef Mahmoud, was deployed with an unusual senior political background (with DPA) which proved valuable experience in navigating the delicate relationship the UN had with the government, as well as advancing the UN’s efforts in social cohesion. Cognizant of his predecessor’s experience, he adopted a careful, modest
tact—knowing he needed to establish credibility, both with wary national counterparts and within the UNCT among which he faced doubters.

The power of modest diplomacy: “It’s not about you”

Mahmoud’s first opportunity to establish credibility would be his first test. A month after arriving, in January 2005, Guyana had its highest rainfall on record since 1888, causing devastating flooding and triggering a humanitarian crisis in Guyana’s most populated areas, officially declared “disaster areas.” The Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP) was used as recovery framework. On 30 January 2005, Mahmoud visited flood-affected areas with national and international partners. The experience helped him gain a better understanding of the country and he used the humanitarian crisis as an entry point to forge a working relationship with the government. In order to create political space, he used humanitarian needs to build credibility, for himself, his role and for the organization—both out of expediency and necessity. He did this by highlighting humanitarian needs and responses, not himself, and by maintaining a low-profile, redirecting media attention to the UN’s local partners while methodically carving out political space for the UN.

Mahmoud credits the eventual confidence he won to three other key factors. First by suspending his preconceptions and instead listening deeply to build, gain and earn trust, he was able to gradually understand how in the Guyanese context, political power was maintained and exercised. This approach had the additional benefit of being culturally appropriate (tapping into the Guyanese affinity “to converse”). Second, he heeded lessons from the UN’s past missteps by withstanding pressure from influential bilateral donors to become their spokesperson while also avoiding being co-opted by elites. Third, he led by empowering others, understanding and fostering the leadership potential of his team on which he relied and for which he facilitated political access. For example, when he arrived, the RC relied on UNICEF’s established contacts and credibility to lead on certain issues, helping to open doors for him.

Mahmoud rallied the small UNCT behind a common direction, through a series of dedicated retreats. Importantly, this led to a conclusion that the UN’s strategy should not be driven by an assessment of Guyanese needs alone but should be complemented by an analysis of Guyana’s own capacities. Shifting the question from “what was going wrong?” to “what was going right?” revealed entry points for fostering lasting change. In particular, Guyana’s dynamic civil society and private sector were national assets whose capabilities could be strengthened, where pathways for dialogue could be forged, and which could become “entrepreneurs for peace”. In this way, Guyana’s resilience to violence would drive the agenda. Mahmoud then built this analysis, effectively replacing the CCA, into the UNDAF itself which revisited prior common objectives so that social cohesion would cut across its priority areas.

Preparing for the 2006 elections

By 2005, the SCP shifted its focus to the 2006 elections, engaging political parties and their youth wings in dialogue, tailoring programs to areas at highest risk for electoral violence, and promoting peace messaging in the media—with successful results. By 2005, SCP participants began to organize across their usual ethnic boundaries to form coalitions for peacebuilding work. For example, one of these, the Inter-Racial Organization (IRO) organized peace walks around the elections with civil society and politicians as a show of unity, and signed pledges for peaceful campaigning. One group, the Spirit of Guyana, became a key partner of the SCP. Other groups followed the lead, mobilizing women, youth, even bikers, for peace.

These developments served as indication of the SCP’s catalysing impact as a climate of restraint and deterrence took hold. Independent observers also credit the SCP with a “new dynamic” in Guyanese politics with engaged citizens and groups gaining visibility and progress toward constitutional reforms gaining momentum. By then, SCP partners included the government, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), and five UN agencies (UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNIFEM). The RC’s SCP team also leveraged both regional expertise and respected international resource persons with relevant experience. For instance, in April 2005 the UN brought in Roelf Meyer, a former South African cabinet member under Nelson Mandela, to lead a two-day national conflict transformation workshop between civil society leaders, political figures, parliament members and government officials. Its success prompted a series of multi-stakeholder forums within a comprehensive “national conversation” called for by the President. In fact, the conflict transformation workshop was the first time Guyanese citizens experienced the freedom to speak openly about their future without party-political dominance and interference.

Among the SCP’s most notable outcomes, were the “converts” the programme produced: participants who became change agents promoting peace in various ways. These citizen peacebuilders could now be found throughout society, influencing public opinion, championing unifying themes, and running for elected office. As intended, they, either through a public role or in their private lives, were empowered to influence public discourse. Lawrence Lachmansingh, one of the SCP’s managers in the PMU, noted frequent encounters with Guyanese citizens who participated in the SCP dialogue forums, who would appear over the following years in various public roles, as civic activists, local politicians, or parliamentarians—all espousing messages of racial harmony.

The 2006 elections became a turning point, the first ever in Guyana’s history to be free from violence. Despite the PPP’s fourth consecutive electoral victory, the PNC accepted the
result. Low voter turnout reflected both public fatigue and fear of electoral violence. This historic event was directly attributed to the success of UN’s Social Cohesion Program in independent studies, although violence prevention and election monitoring programmes of other organisations also contributed to the outcome.

But the SCP was also not without its challenges. Its grassroots approach was fragmented at times, and focusing on individuals in lieu of institutional governance capacity had limitations in terms of ensuring the sustainability of the program’s impact. Partly to balance this shortcoming, the 2006-10 UNDAF featured an “inclusive system of governance based on the rule of law” as one of three national priorities, embedding social cohesion and “equal access to justice, protection and security.” And because the SCP consciously avoided more “muscular” forms of mediation, there were no high-level channels in place to capture grassroots goodwill and translate it into political change or institutional capacity. One study suggests adjooning diplomatic pressure may have been able to exert leverage or offer incentives sufficient to enable those enlightened civic values gained from SCP to permeate the realm of policy. Others suggested it enabled the government to evade thorny political or social justice problem solving. Its successor program, the Enhancing Public Trust, Security and Inclusion (EPTSI), discussed in the next section, did eventually try to take these critiques on board in its design.

Enhancing Public Trust, Security and Inclusion (EPTSI)

Following the successful 2006 elections, the SPC program ended. With the departure of Mahmoud and his SCP team in the PMU, the political appetite, funding and UN leadership for social cohesion went dormant. It would be two years before the SPC’s successor would emerge. During this period of relative calm and economic growth, the new RC, Aboubacry Tall (Feb. 2007- June 2009), focused on other priorities. In 2008, the Framework Team in New York sent a joint mission of DPA-MSU and experts from UNDP’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) to see if the program could be salvaged. They met with UNCT colleagues, government representatives, and partners to assess stakeholder interest and national capacity. They encouraged a reluctant RC to be supportive.

With homicide levels remaining high and “phantom squads” engaging in extrajudicial killings, the RC was able to negotiate the SCP’s resurrection with a government insistent on national ownership over direction of any new program. So, in a new incarnation of the SCP, the EPTSI programme (standing for “Enhancing Public Trust, Security and Inclusion”) was approved by the cabinet in November 2008 to strengthen community security and local-level conflict resolution, leading up to the next election in 2011. Such was government involvement, that the head of the Presidential Secretariat took a lead role in recruiting the RC’s new PDA. Trevor Clarke led the program from his arrival in March 2009.

In this role, he conducted a baseline survey (completed in November 2009) revealing gaps in state provision of citizen security, finding a public trust deficit in police, reinforced by extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests of opposition members which were ascribed to state security forces.

The PDA’s analysis provided the evidence base informing program design and helped get donors on board, although many were concerned about the government’s influence over the program infringing on the UN’s impartiality. DPA and UNDP-BCPR helped design, and the latter also provided funding for the 3-year, US$7 million program with additional support from DFID, CIDA, and the EU.

In 2009, a new RC arrived, Mamadou Kiari Liman–Tinguiri (2009-11), who soon found himself in a difficult position, needing to maintain support for EPTSI from a sovereignty conscious government while having to defend the program to donors who complained the UN was too close to the government and couldn’t fairly represent their concerns. With the historical vulnerability of the RC in Guyana to pressure from both government and donors, any missteps could easily bring about the end of the program.

With limited political space at the centre, but eager to improve citizen security by building on the remains of community-level goodwill produced by the SCP, EPTSI aimed at violence reduction at the local level, with a particular focus on youth. By mid-2011, with neither a PDA nor an RC in place, a Kenyan Democratic Governance Advisor (George Wachira) was brought into the RCO/UNDP Project Management Unit to support EPTSI for five months. Part of EPTSI’s strategy was to precipitate a shift in Guyanese political engagement from ethnic/racial identity to an issues-based one. It tried to achieve this through:

• “Youth empowerment and livelihoods’ with youth vocational training, leveraging the national UNV program as a means to provide cross-ethnic conflict resolution training to marginalized young people’;

• ‘Enhancing community dialogue and social cohesion’ in which the PDA led legislation-writing training programmes for local Guyanese lawmakers, and

• A ‘Reduced risks’ initiative working with media for positive, non-inflammatory coverage.

However, despite the project’s limitations, capacities built through EPTSI did eventually contribute to the peaceful conduct of the 2011 polls - at least in the internal assessment of the UN’s Political Affairs Department.

Although strong government control of EPTSI brought national ownership, it also subjected its conflict prevention work to the very partisan politics that historically drove those conflicts while limiting space for civil society design and leadership beyond the local level. At that time, the Ethnic Relations Commission formed in 2003 had fallen apart and would not be resumed for eight years, leaving no obvious
national institutional home for a project focused largely on building capacity for conflict prevention.62

It was the incoming RC, Khadija Musa (Feb. 2012 – Aug. 2016) who was able to make political headway. In her first RC posting she demonstrated an early willingness to take political risks.63

The 2015 Election and Insider Mediation “Guyanese for Peace”

Guyanese resilience was tested again in the lead up to the 2015 elections, called early due to a tense political impasse. Historic racial tensions resumed when polling in advance of the vote predicted a close race threatening to end a two-decade reign of the ruling party and resurrecting the spectre of violence.

Against this background, RC Musa, with PDA guidance, tried to revive political dialogue efforts, carefully building confidence with both the ruling and opposition parties to position the UN as an impartial arbiter. Together, they produced a non-paper with possible steps for dialogue which was presented to the President. Despite the President’s personal willingness to listen and apparent inclination to make concessions, his party objected. When she then approached CARICOM for support, it declined.

Once parties started their electoral campaigns, the election’s high stakes became clear so the RC and PDA tried another, two-pronged approach. First, they would support the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) with technical assistance and advice, and media monitoring as they did for the 2011 elections in order to produce a conducive environment for peaceful elections.

Second, George Wachira, who in 2012 had assumed the post of PDA (2012-15)64 drew from his experience as a member of the Kenyan ‘Concerned Citizens for Peace’ network, which was a core part of Kenya’s national peace infrastructure, to tap into the UN’s extensive network of Guyanese citizens and groups established in the context of both the SCP and EPTSI programs to create a conflict prevention capacity for and beyond elections (See Kenya case study of this project).

The most significant effort within this endeavor constituted the ‘Guyanese for Peace’ group, the creation of which was facilitated by the PDA with RC guidance. Group members served in their personal capacities and committed to promote peace through mediation, peace messaging, conflict analysis and response and early warning and response. Made up of sixteen respected public figures capable to influencing public discourse, abating tensions and directly engaging politicians, the group included an ethnically balanced mix of academics, two former election commission chairs, community and religious leaders, and importantly, a communications expert.65

During the electoral campaign, the group was inserted into a “Situation Room,” which the RC’s PDA-led team had set up to function as an early warning and response capacity for elections. From there, the Guyanese for Peace monitored social media activity for signs of unrest or inflammatory rumours which may spark violence, reacting in real-time to rising tensions and racially charged rumors. For example, during the tense vote counting, when false rumours spread of certain ethnic groups “marching into town” with weapons, Guyanese for Peace, contacted the local police station and residents negating the “fake news,” then posted real-time photos of calm streets, immediately diffusing tension. During this period, they also started an impromptu TV show, “Guyana first, Guyana wins” promoting peace messaging and calming tensions.

The Guyanese for Peace effort is significant for three reasons: 1) it was the first time a formal insider mediation role had successfully been used in Guyana’s national peace infrastructure; 2) it formalized a civil society role in that structure; and, most importantly, 3) it arguably contributed to a peaceful electoral process that had the strong potential to end in violence. The PDA recalled, “You can do little things with big impact.”

The biggest test, however, came on election day itself, when the vote count confirmed what the polls had predicted, with the results standing on knife’s edge and the multi-racial opposition party Alliance for Change emerging victorious, winning 33 out of 65 seats, with 32 seats going to the PPP.

With the prospect of being unseated after 23 years in power, the outgoing president initially called the vote “rigged” and demanded a recount (notwithstanding the fact that international observers had assessed the election as “free and fair”). Behind-the-scenes the RC-led team66 and members of the Guyanese for Peace group engaged the incumbent president and opposition leaders, calling on them to exercise political maturity, adhere to pledges of codes of conduct, and refrain from incitement.67 Importantly, they also created space for the Elections Commission to ultimately certify the results. The RC explains, “What made us effective is that we had the ear of both sides.”68

Following the 2015 peaceful elections, the issue again was sustainability. Many of those interviewed pointed to the recurrent dilemma in conflict prevention work of simultaneously having to address symptoms and structural causes. After a gap, another PDA succeeded Wachira, staying less than a year. Guyanese for Peace disbanded following the elections. At the same time, structural reforms within UNDP eliminated BCPR, weakening UNDP’s ability to drive prevention programming on the ground.

Interviewees also cited the difficulty in maintaining momentum, leadership, funding and political incentives between elections. Elections, like other crises, can help “focus” the national conversation. Elections offer expedient political entry points for UN prevention work that should
be leveraged to build national capacities for peace. “But”, as one PDA observed, “when you succeed in prevention you remove the motivation of doing anything beyond.”

Focusing exclusively on near-term goals (peaceful elections) can mean a missed opportunity to help build local and national foundations for self-sustaining peace. To do this, RCs must overcome the “tyranny of the urgent” and open up space for strategic thinking about longer-term goals. Guyana’s PDAs also underscored the need to leverage what’s been done already, while including local partners in those efforts, but raised the challenge of how to encourage them to take ownership.

3. Overall Impact

There is a “unanimous view” that it was Guyanese civil society which deserves prime credit for breaking the decades-long cycle of electoral violence that allowed for peaceful elections in 2006. The 2006 elections also helped to change public attitudes that had come to see electoral violence as normal.

Overwhelmingly, independent studies on the Guyanese experience also conclude that the UN’s Social Cohesion Programme can claim significant credit for providing catalytic support to national change agents by promoting interethic dialogue and social inclusion and offering an alternative to violence to air grievances and promote group interests.

The SCP thus helped impart social norms of non-violence, promote social unity as citizens adopted different views about community identity and ethnic harmony as a direct result of their participation.

Independent reviews highlight in particular the effective role played by RC Youssef Mahmoud (2004-06) in, actively promoting and consolidating international support for peacebuilding and prevention, providing the necessary stimulus that helped ensure the 2006 elections would be non-violent. He successfully exerted leverage with the government, established trust with national partners, and created entry points for the UN to work on politically sensitive prevention programs tailored to both Guyana’s needs and strengths.

Beyond the 2006 elections, the medium-term impacts of the SCP’s ‘cultural’ or ‘strategic’ peacebuilding became evident in the decade that followed. First, the tone of national discourse itself was not only tempered, but wholly transformed. The 2006 Presidential inaugural address emphasized cooperation, cohesion and harmony – terms echoed by local politicians and other officials. This language constituted a marked change in tone, as peace discourse borne of the SCP permeated cultural, business, religious and social circles. Second, in 2008, civilian massacres prompted civic and political leaders to band together to solve the crisis and condemn human rights violations. Third, and perhaps most notably, a new, multi-ethnic political party emerged, the Alliance for Change, with messages of change and hope (with a slogan, “Don’t vote race. Vote change.”), and a rejection of racial violence, which quickly found popular resonance and emerged victorious in the 2015 elections as part of a broader coalition. Fourth, just as coalition politics became more common, since this period, census data revealed an increase in the incidence of inter-racial marriages.

Meanwhile, funding, leadership and domestic political dynamics have inhibited the sustainability of the UN’s conflict prevention efforts since 2003. Following the 2006 elections, international interest and funding for peacebuilding in Guyana dried up; and with it, any immediate political incentives to continue with social cohesion. One study posits that the government’s and opposition’s participation in the SCP was merely a “marriage of convenience” rather than an endorsement of conflict transformation. This may explain why, for various reasons, subsequent RCs were unable to maintain political space, leaving prevention programs to largely go dormant after 2006, except for electoral periods.

As RCs, following Mahmoud’s departure, adopted a conservative stance favouring good relations with the government over politically sensitive programming, the UNCT’s appetite for risk also diminished, reverting to a “don’t rock the boat” disposition. This has come at a cost. An external review of a later UNDAF (2012-16) found it lacked strategic focus, included “everything under the sun” and reported little progress in social cohesion, human rights and public security, attributed to “political interference.”

Governance and justice reforms remain elusive. The failure to leverage and build on the UN’s reputation, historical success and legitimising power to advance these issues, particularly when new conflict triggers loom on the horizon, surely constitutes a missed opportunity. Whether the UN can overcome this reticence will depend on its leadership, and whether lessons of the past will be heeded.

4. Lessons and Good Practices

Based on the above analysis of the experiences of the UN system in Guyana, the following lessons and good practices might be useful for RCs deployed in other fragile settings:

**RC profile matters:** If RCs are expected to do conflict prevention, they must have the skills, instincts and sensitivity for political engagement as well as the willingness to take calculated risks. In Guyana, RCs with political acumen, flexibility and a measured embrace of risk have found significantly greater success as preventive actors than those without these assets. But an RC empowered in this role must be able to rely on the support of Headquarters, if calculated risk-taking in the pursuit of prevention puts him or her at odds with the government as happened to RC Sorensen in 2002.

**Engineering government consent for prevention initiatives by RCs is critical:** The Guyana case shows that government support is essential for RCs assuming a proactive prevention role. The absence thereof had tied the UN’s hands in this respect prior to 2003 (limiting it to preventive engagement under the guise of work on HIV-AIDS programming). Consent
emerged as a result of a number of factors, in particular the government’s own realisation that it needed UN support to maintain legitimacy offered by stable, violence-free elections and avoiding a slide into open conflict. Pressure from the donor community helped as well, as did the RC’s and the wider UNCT’s able performance in humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of the 2003 flooding. Meanwhile, interpersonal approaches matter as well: Explaining his success in engineering consent, RC Youssef Mahmoud, keenly aware of the high risk of losing confidence of government counterparts, highlighted the importance of being a good listener. Resisting the “temptation” to problem-solve prematurely, listening allows RCs to understand political motivations, enabling anticipation of next moves and thus, entry points for prevention work.

While consent is critical, too close a relationship carries equal risks: Likewise, the Guyana case offers sobering lessons in safeguarding UN principles and mandates, while balancing the necessity for government support in a difficult political context, particularly when the government is a non-neutral actor in its conflict. In Guyana, the EPTSI program, developed in 2008 as a successor program of the SPC, suffered from the outset that it granted too much control and influence to the government, undermining its credibility among both donors and the people, its commendable work on local-level positive violence reduction and youth engagement notwithstanding.

Seize the opportunity of elections as entry point for preventive action: The Guyana case confirms that elections offer expedient political entry points for RCs and UN Country Teams that can be leveraged to engage in a broad range of activities to prevent electoral violence and build national capacities for peace. The high-points of RC-led preventive action in Guyana since 2000 were in the run-up to the 2006 and 2016 elections, where prevention-minded RCs managed to carve out a role for themselves by developing innovative models of RC-led preventive engagement around elections, such as the SPC in 2003-06 as well as support to the Guyanese for Peace group and the Situation Room in 2014-15. However, in Guyana, UN-focus on and donor interest in prevention faded once elections were held, constituting a missed opportunity to help build even stronger local and national foundations for self-sustaining peace. Successful work around preventing electoral violence should therefore be used as a basis for longer-term preventive engagement.

Peace and Development Advisors are key to RC prevention success, but inconsistency in deployment undermines their potential: With technical and political expertise, and experience in conflict prevention, PDAs bring critical prevention capacity to the RCO. When these PDAs are empowered with RC confidence and political access, they can function like a “Deputy RC”, capable of identifying opportunities where the UN’s comparative advantage and convening power can be best leveraged. Indeed, in 2003, the PDA was able to lay the foundation for and negotiate the first entry points with the government for the SCP during a time when no RC was in place. In Guyana, RC confidence and support allowed the PDA to identify and seize entry points where the UN could carve out a role to pursue long-term prevention goals, while insulating him/her from potential backlash or criticism (internal and external). UNCT relations also benefitted where the PDA was able to influence programme design and implementation with peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Also, the continuity of PDAs, on annual contracts, did prove problematic, particularly when coinciding with a concurrent gap in RC. Many interviewees noted how these gaps between RC and PDA deployments in Guyana interrupted momentum, risked gains, and made the UN vulnerable to being co-opted by the government.

Tailored headquarters support: In the case of Guyana, when UNHQ support was consistent, agile and tailored to specific country needs, the RC, PDA and his/her team were more effective. Its weaknesses (which led to its later disbandment) notwithstanding, interviewees unanimously agreed that the UN Framework Team backstopping Guyana with small group inter-agency discussions via monthly conference calls fostered a constructive exchange of ideas and problem solving, not just information sharing, that was focused on field needs and capable of meeting them, deploying experts, funds, capacity with positive results. Other PDAs also noted the regular communication offset the sometimes “lonely” nature of PDA work.

Prevention by another name: Language matters. In Guyana, the prevention effort was called “social cohesion,” a term resonating a positive concept of peace and unity beyond the absence of violence. It de-politicized and de-securitized the usual mediation on conflict prevention in an electoral context, among elites. By definition, civil society gained a voice, a role, and a power to change the nature of public discourse to one emphasizing building trust within individual relationships among society’s members, directly challenging divisive political rhetoric and its corrosive impact on Guyana’s social fabric. From a buzzword when first introduced, to an established social value fifteen years later, the term still carries currency in Guyana.

Civil society partnerships as political entry points: In a racially divided, violence-prone political context, civil society individuals and inclusive groups can rise to be a powerful “third force” in local and national politics, cutting across bifurcated social divides and racial biases when supported with skills, capacity and public confidence. RCs can coalesce UN technical and policy support to those ends, helping them carve out a role. In Guyana, subsequent capacity building enabled them to take ownership of and define the national peace agenda, thereby also protective them from aid dependence and external influence.

National staff as peace advisors: The Guyana case shows that the unique perspectives and guidance of national staff can provide an RC with invaluable insight, extensive local
networks and deep knowledge of local conflict drivers, local perceptions and political dynamics. In this role, key national staff can identify and expedite trust-building with local partners, acting at times as a kind of inside mediator in brokering a UN role in political sensitive areas of work. Former RC Mahmoud highlighted the pivotal role of Lawrence Lachmansingh as one of the architects and a key manager of the Social Cohesion Program. Concerns over public perceptions of UN national staff neutrality can be managed and should not discourage their role.

**Return on Investment (RoI):** Colleagues interviewed for this study stressed that in a small nation like Guyana, interventions requiring relatively modest investments have shown disproportionally large impacts are possible, particularly where there is little donor interest, scant investment or where the UN may be among few other multilateral organizations in an uncrowded scene. The potential impact of investing in conflict prevention capacities in “off the radar” countries like Guyana is demonstrated by the SCP’s success.
Endnotes


*The author would like to thank the following individuals for agreeing to be interviewed, reviewing the draft, and/or providing relevant documents: Yousef Mahmoud, Srdan Deric, Lawrence Lachmansingh, Fabio Olivia, George Wachira, Chris Spies, Thomas Gass, Martha Doggett, Marylene Smeets, Gay Rosenblum-Kumar, Erin McCandless and Peter Barwick. A special thank you to Guyana’s Peace and Development Advisors for their valuable contributions. The author bears sole responsibility for any mistakes or omissions in this report. The views and assessments expressed in this report are not necessarily shared by the individuals listed above.


3 “Vote your own” is a translation of a PPP rallying cry in Hindi, “apan jhaat”. Myers, R and Calder, J. 2011, p. 27.


5 Myers, R and Calder, J. 2011, p. 28.


7 Ibid.

8 CARICOM was an organization mandated to regional economic cooperation. The peace agreement was known as the Herdan Accord, signed in January 1998. Chaubey, V et al. 2012.


10 Ibid


13 “Guyana Development Policy Review: The Challenges of Governance and Growth.” World Bank, Report No. 25640-GUA. 2003. By coincidence, a UN Headquarters staff was in attendance at the CARICOM conference when the violence broke out and was consequently an advocate for a UN conflict prevention role.

14 In July 2012, the RC confronted a situation in which media personalities later arrested for their role in the storming of the President’s Office tried to coopt the UN in get involved. Richards, Andrew. “UN has no role in legal matters from presidential office storming –Olver.” Stabroek News. July 2002, www.landofsixpeoples.com/news022/ns207123.htm.


16 After leaving Guyana, Olver became Associate Director of United Nations Development Group at UN HQ in New York.

17 This would be first of two notable periods in which there was no RC deployed to Guyana. The second was between May 2008 and February 2009.


21 Ibid.

22 Interview with former UNDP deputy resident representative. October 2017.


24 The joint UN mission had representatives from DPA, UNDP, (Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery), DESA, OCHA, and OHCHR. UNDP, 2014, p. 47. It also included three donors: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the European Commission, and the UK Department for International

Consisting of the PDA (Chris Spies) a Human Rights Advisor (Maarit Cohonen) and a national conflict advisor (Lawrence Lachmansingh).

Notably, the project proposal, developed in consultation with civil society and some members of government, avoided the conflict prevention label. It multidimensionality reflects its collaborative design, encompassing political, development, humanitarian and human rights elements. “Improving Social Cohesion, Security and Governance in Guyana: A UNCT Project.” 2003.

Lund, M. 2015, p. 91.

The RC negotiated its language with guidance from UNDP and DPA.


The PDA, Chris Spies, deployed in September 2003, led the design and implementation of the Social Cohesion Program until November 2006. Lund 2015, p. 92.


Ibid

The Community Development Resources Association is based in Cape Town, South Africa. See: www.cdra.org.za/


These forums were actually a collection of 14 component projects among target stakeholder groups, including: Political leaders and parties, youths and local communities, the business community, trade unions, law enforcement officials (police, judiciary and magistrates), election processes and procedures (Guyana Elections Commission), Ethnic Relations Commission, Multi-Stakeholder Fora and National Conversation, local authorities (RDC training and pilot planning), peacebuilding process facilitators, media, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Parliament, Prime Minister and Presidents’ Offices.


Estimates conclude approximately 5% of Guyana’s total population were directly reached by SCP, and many more indirectly. Across Guyana, 164 district meetings resulted as follow up to SCP trainings, involving 1,650 people, with an additional 23,000 reached by SCP-supported media products. “Can fostering a culture of dialogue change the course of a nation? An evaluation of the Social Cohesion Programme. Key findings and Summary of Recommendations.” 2007, p.9.

The ERC ran public initiatives 2004-2006 (E.g. national film festival themed around peace and tolerance; conflict transformation workshops, consultative meetings).

A series of conflict mediation workshops for police were held between 2005-2006. From Guyana’s 10 regions, several were targeted (Regions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10) in the program. Regional Democratic Chair (RDC) Chairpersons and counselors also participated in peacebuilding and conflict transformation workshops in Guyana and Turkey. UNDP, 2014, ‘Emerging

53 These include the Progressive Youth Organization (PYO) affiliated with the PPP and the Guyana Youth and Student Movement (GYSM) linked to the PNC. The UN enabled the leadership of these two groups to attend a summer peacebuilding institute program in the U.S.; UNDP, 2014, ‘Emerging Promising Practices in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding,’ p. 49.


55 The program was based in parts of Georgetown and the nearby coastal areas with histories of election related violence. Myers, R and Calder, J. 2011, p. 52.


59 In his dual Humanitarian Coordinator function, he cites, “I was a novice, I had no choice.” Interview with Youssef Mahmoud, former RC. October 2017.

60 Myers, R and Calder, J. 2011, p. 51.


64 The workshop’s goal was “to explore and exchange ideas from the conflict transformation perspective to help us collectively chart a peaceful course for the future.” Spies, C. 2005, p. 4.


68 Lund, M. 2015.

69 The Carter Center, the Organization for American States (OAS), USAID and DFID ran complementary violence prevention programs supporting the elections. OAS deployed long-term observers and short-term elections monitors, backed by several high-level visits. Babett (2012), p. 360.


73 The joint mission included Peter Barwick (DPA/MSU) and Chetan Kumar (UNDP/BCPR).


75 Tinguiri had a UNICEF background and was formerly RC in Equatorial Guinea. As senior development experts, neither Tall nor Tinguiri had political experience. Both were near retirement.


77 The UNDP Resident Representative was Acting RC then.

78 He later returned in 2012 as the PDA.


The dissolution of the Ethnic Relations Committee was prompted by an injunction filed by the PNC over complaints of its ethnic composition. During the dispute, most members had left. It wouldn’t resume until January 2018. See: www.ethnicrelations.org.gy/about3.html

83 Prior to her appointment to Guyana, Ms. Musa served as Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP to Egypt. “New UN Resident Coordinator appointed.” Guyana Chronicle. 15 February 2012, guyanachronicle.com/2012/02/15/new-un-resident-coordinator-appointed. Also Interview with former PDA. January 2018.

84 In mid-2011, Wachira was deployed as a consultant (democratic governance advisor) in advance of elections that year. He stayed 5 months (observing there had been a 5 year hiatus without a PDA), returning as PDA in 2012


86 This team consisted of the PDA, a UN Governance Advisor and a UN elections monitor.

87 “Guyana.” UN DPA. Mini-case study, Confidential document.

88 Personal interview with former RC Khadija Musa, March 2018.

89 Interview with former PDA. February 2018.

90 Simmons, T and Myers, R. 2006, p. 11.
91 Myers, R and Calder, J. 2011, p. 75.
92 This also holds true for subsequent elections in 2011 and 2015. UNDP, 2007, p. 14; Simmons and Myers, 2006; Myers and Calder, 2011.
93 Myers, R and Calder, J. 2011, p. 69.
94 Ibid, p. 75.
96 E.g. The discovery of oil deposits with no revenue-sharing plan.
98 Interview. December 2017.