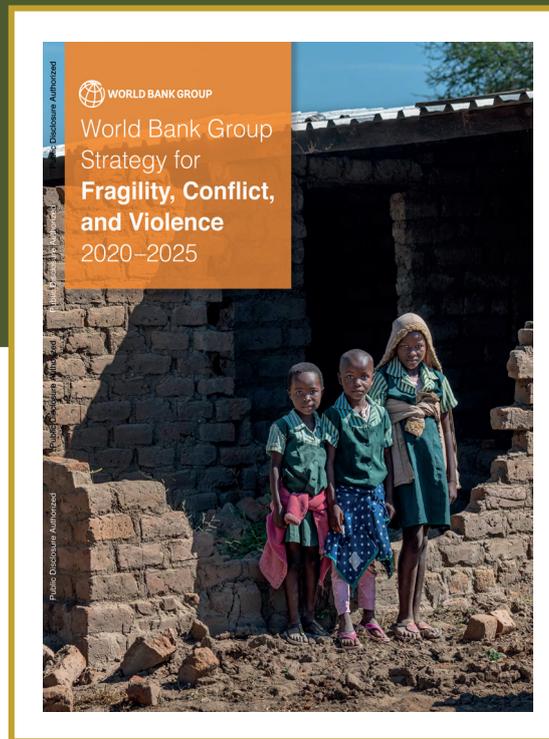




**INTERNATIONAL  
REPORTS**



**LETHAL COMPLICATIONS:  
CONFLICT, VIOLENCE, FRAGILITY AND TERRORISM**





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## LETHAL COMPLICATIONS: CONFLICT, VIOLENCE, FRAGILITY AND TERRORISM

**Conflict**, violence, fragility and terrorism are lethal weapons drawn to drawn to one another like magnets. Wherever there is conflict, violence grows; whenever government capacities are fragile, terrorism operates. Where there is terrorism, conflicts and violence grow, and the fragility of the state increases.

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI 2022) has reported that conflict is yet the driving force behind terrorism. Each of the ten countries most afflicted by terrorism in 2021 was engaged in at least one armed conflict. Since 2007, 92% of the fatalities caused by terrorism were in conflict zones. The percentage has increased over the last three years to 95.8%, then 97.6% in 2021. A report, titled **World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025**, issued by the World Bank, discusses this important issue in detail. In view of its importance, we hereby present some of the the major highlights.

## Comprehensive Approach

Conflict is closely related to terrorism; with rising conflict, terrorism prevails against the police and army, and even more against civilians. Terrorism is utilized to achieve short-and long-term goals, as is the case in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. This strong correlation between internal conflict and terrorism is manifested in both developing and developed countries. Even though the severity of conflict differs in both, the overall impact on terrorism remains the same.

The same applies to terrorism and fragility; three out of the ten most fragile countries on the Fragile States Index (FSI of 2021): Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria, are among the ten countries most afflicted by terrorism on GTI of 2022. Given that grim reality, studies, almost unanimously, agree on the importance of fighting terrorism according to a comprehensive approach that addresses the conditions and causes which give rise to and ground terrorism, most prominently conflict, either internal or external, as well as the fragility spreading across the world.

The World Bank's report, **World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025**, reveals that almost half the world population is poor

due to the conflict-affected fragile conditions, which will even hit two thirds of the world population by 2030. This global fragility has gotten worse; conflicts have become more unprecedentedly violent than the past 30 years; the world is facing the largest exodus of all time.

Historical analysis shows that severely fragile countries foster 40% of poverty across the world, while countries that survived fragility have less poverty rates by more than half. Countries on the (Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations) FCS list have suffered from a dramatic increase in poverty, while non-FCS countries have witnessed a steady decline in poverty.

## Complex Settings

Countries regarded as fragile suffer deep-rooted governance problems, institutional weaknesses, injustices, exclusion, poor basic services, weakened capacity or unwillingness to mitigate risks. Conflict spreads when groups resort to violence when settling injustices or asserting dominance beyond the law.

Conflict, violence, fragility, and their various, complex settings require approaches tailored to fit the geography, history, and drives of conflict particular



to each environment, which often result from turmoil that developed over many years. This does not mean that the causes are sometimes immediate (e.g., foreign invasions or natural disasters). Besides, the three elements of conflict, violence, and fragility are strongly interrelated; violent conflict has notably tripled globally over the past decade, since 2010, mostly due to internal conflicts and the proliferation of armed groups. Despite the mild decline in the number of casualties of violent conflict recently, it increasingly affected 11% of afflicted areas all over the world.

Fragility is deep-rooted and chronic. Over the past decade, 30 countries, mostly low-income, have shown chronic fragility. The less capable institutions and governments are of managing constraints or mitigating the impact of climate change, natural disasters, and economic and social crises, the more risk-sensitive stability of states and communities is. Fragile countries tend to take a path that relies on their history, geographic location, economic and social structures, or power. These elements are hard to change completely. Thus, fragility has been an intricate matter for decades.

People may fight for the same old reasons, but conflicts today are more complex. They reach whole new levels. This undermines the assumption that conflict is limited to poor or low-income countries, and that stable communities are immune. In fact, a number of medium-income countries with acceptable institutional capacities, regular elections, and capable security forces, also suffer internal conflicts far from poverty, but rather related to the lack of economic and political integration, social equity, and redress of real or perceived grievances. As a result, transnational violent extremist groups have taken advantage of these internal conflicts to ground fragility even deeper and threaten more areas.

Besides, violence among individuals, organized criminal activities, and violence based on gender has become a major threat to development and a direct cause of fragility. Almost half a million people are killed annually on account of such violence. Such fatalities are sometimes even higher in some areas than in conflict zones.

These high rates of conflict and violence have led to the largest exodus of all time. There is about 71 million displaced people all over the world, 41 million of whom have migrated internally. Hence, forced

displacement has become a complex, long-term matter, together with its substantial socioeconomic impact on both immigrants and hosting communities. Displaced women and children account for 75% of total displaced people. 85% of forced displacement takes place in low-and-medium-income countries, 72% of which takes place in underdeveloped areas of these countries.

Hosting countries themselves contribute to the rising internal displacements, which pose serious challenges to addressing the case. Moreover, internal displacements resulting from conflict and violence are often driven by inner motives.

Thus, they cannot be addressed separately from the causes conducive to them such as severe lack of food security and famine that mostly results from political upheavals; almost every famine since the 1980s has taken place in countries afflicted by conflict, fragility, and violence.

Looking ahead, the World Bank Group (WBG) seeks to achieve **three goals of supporting forcibly displaced communities**:

1. Providing socioeconomic development opportunities for displaced persons and hosting communities, and mitigating the shock caused by the influx of refugees and internally displaced people;
2. Facilitating sustainable solutions to protracted situations of internal displacement, through sustainable socioeconomic integration of refugees in hosting countries, or sending them back home;
3. Enhancing countries' preparedness to face the crises of forced displacement.

### Global Factors

The challenges arising from "conflict, violence, and fragility" have become rising global challenges. They are no longer confined within borders, and they generate regional and global circumstances that often turn into multilateral crises in a world of lightning-fast communications, ideologies, financing, and crime. Many crises have grown into more complicated issues with international, regional, national, and societal ties. This partially explains the difficulty of addressing these challenges within a local framework only.

Some of the most prominent **global factors** affecting "conflict, violence, and fragility" alike are:



1. **Climate Change:** It is expected by 2030 that climate change will have driven 100 million more people into poverty; by 2050, 143 million people may have migrated because of climate change; this is besides the instability that will take place in three major areas: Sub-Saharan African, Southern Asia, and Latin America.
2. **Population Challenges:** Such as high levels of fertility and youth dependency. These challenges can lead to higher poverty rates and lower levels of infant care, higher unemployment, and increased turmoil and instability.
3. **Injustices:** Especially among genders. Injustices exacerbate already fragile situations, given that female-headed households increase significantly on account of conflict and violence.
4. **Digital Transformation:** Despite its positive influence on the promotion of peace, it also negatively widens the economic gaps that result in exclusion, as well as uncharted territory of criminal networks or extremist groups.
5. **Illicit Trafficking:** Criminal networks or extremist groups have benefitted from the mobility and interrelations facilitated by digital transformation in illicit trafficking.

### FCV Strategy Framework

The objective of the WBG's Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) is to enhance the WBG's effectiveness in supporting countries in addressing the drivers and impacts of FCV and strengthening their resilience, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. The strategy sets out a new framework for understanding FCV and a robust set of measures to increase the effectiveness of WBG development support to both low-and-middle-income countries that are facing diverse challenges across the FCV spectrum, including high levels of violence, forced displacement shocks, and conflict.

The FCV Strategy builds on a range of inputs—including successive Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) reviews, global consultations carried out during 2019, and lessons learned from operational experience—to systematically address the root causes of fragility as well as the long-term risks that can drive or exacerbate conflict and violence. An essential premise for the FCV Strategy is that, given the diversity of FCV challenges, there can be no one-size-fits-all



approach. Therefore, each approach must be adapted to the distinct circumstances of FCV settings of each country, with Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) and programs tailored to addressing the root causes of fragility. Greater on-the-ground work is key in the most challenging environments, and development actors must plan to stay engaged over the long term, to address conflict and crisis situations.

Building on operational experience in FCV settings, the FCV Strategy is structured around **four pillars**:

1. Preventing violent conflict and interpersonal violence by addressing the drivers of fragility and immediate-to-long-term risks—such as: Climate change, patterns of discrimination, economic and social exclusion, and grievances, before tensions grow into full-blown crises.
2. Preserving hard-won development gains during conflict and crisis situations, protecting essential institutions, building resilience, and preparing for future recovery.
3. Helping countries transition out of fragility, by promoting approaches that can renew the social contract between citizens and the state, foster a healthy local private sector, and strengthen the legitimacy and capacity of institutions.
4. Mitigating the impact of FCV by supporting countries and the most vulnerable and marginalized communities that are impacted by cross-border crises, such as forced displacement or trauma resulting from famines, pandemics, and climate and environmental challenges.

In addition, the WBG places special emphasis on six high-priority issues in FCV settings: (i) investing

in human capital; (ii) supporting macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability; (iii) creating jobs and economic opportunities; (iv) endorsing justice and the rule of law; (v) developing the security sector; and (vi) building community resilience, especially regarding the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. The FCV Strategy recognizes the importance of pursuing public and private sector solutions to help create jobs, deliver services, foster social cohesion, and promote inclusive economic growth, as well as supporting local private sector actors, improving conflict-sensitive investment approaches, and assisting in the catalytic activity and de-risking of investments in FCV settings. The FCV Strategy recognizes that working in FCV settings often carries significantly higher risks, such as (i) the physical security risk to WBG staff; (ii) the high risk of violence against vulnerable groups; (iii) weak or nonexistent institutional capacity; (iv) environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks; and (v) risks including fraud and corruption.

Elevated risks require cooperation with international humanitarian organizations, NGOs, civil society, and local actors, given their great on-the-ground presence in areas that are hard to reach, as well as



their expertise and substantive knowledge of FCV environments.

### Regional Interventions

Overall, 80% of countries that were on the FCS list in 2012 remain on it today. These countries tend to relapse into violence and present major risks for their neighbors. They constitute hubs for extremist groups and human trafficking gangs, and contribute to forced migration to neighboring countries. Subsequently, the WBG will continue to address FCV impacts on people, especially the weak and marginalized, whether residing in rural areas and lacking basic services, or living in constant fear of the high levels of violence faced by their homelands.

Recovery and reconstruction do not necessarily take place with a formal peace agreement. In countries that have functional institutions and high levels of human capital, reconstruction should follow a different path than in those that remain in deep fragility. Recovery efforts must focus primarily on rebuilding social cohesion and addressing the long-term drivers of violence.

People's trust in the state gets eroded quickly, as does trust between social groups, when a country experiences high levels of violence and low government capacity. The pact between elites becomes fragile or absent, and the state can be captured by a handful

of people having specific vested interests that are disconnected from the population's needs and rights.

Fragility is not limited to the drivers of conflict, but encompasses multiple and intersectional risks that weaken systems and threaten lives. These include climate change, natural disasters, and natural resource degradation, which put stress on economic, social, and political systems. Where institutions and governments are unable to manage the stress or absorb the shocks of these challenges, the risks to the stability of states and societies may increase, and, eventually, cause greater forced displacement than conflicts do.

It is, therefore, critical that interventions to address FCV and increase resilience be paired with interventions that foster and protect human capital. The delivery of social services is also more complicated in fragile settings, where institutions are more limited in their ability to function and where conflict and violence can impede project implementation. The Human Capital Index shows that FCS countries significantly lag behind non-FCS countries in every measure of human capital. Protecting and building human capital is arguably one of the most important sources of resilience. This means addressing FCV and human development work in tandem, since many risk factors related to violence and fragility are closely linked to human development,



which makes education, health, and social protection key entry points for addressing the impact of violence. Accordingly, WBG programs should adapt to the needs of at-risk groups that suffer the most:

- I. **Children who need**, who need improved nutrition, education, and basic health care;
- II. **Women** who are suffering from gender-based violence, and who need equal access to job opportunities, education, and representation in decision-making at the household, community, local and national levels;
- III. **Young people** who need employment opportunities and skills as well as opportunities to play a constructive role in society, particularly those who seek to make meaningful contributions to in their communities.

### Operationalizing the WBG's FCV Strategy

To operationalize the FCV Strategy, the WBG sets out 23 measures to strengthen the WBG's effectiveness in FCV settings. Implementation is structured around "4 Ps": **policies, programming, partnerships, and personnel**.

**Policies:** The WBG develops a framework with regards to engagement in humanitarian crises and forced displacement situations, and engagement on approaches to dealing with security and military actors. The aim is to ensure that policies, processes, and practices are fit-for-purpose, streamlined, and flexible for FCV settings.

**Programming:** WBG's strategies and operations will address the drivers of FCV, and will adapt approaches to the complex and changing dynamics of FCV settings.

**Personnel:** The WBG will increase its on-the-ground presence in FCV settings, as well as further invest in the skills, knowledge, expertise, and incentives needed for staff to deliver.

**Partnerships:** Based on respective complementarities and comparative advantages, the WBG will further step up its partnerships with humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, security, and private sector actors to maximize impact on the ground.

Building on operational and analytic experience in FCV settings, the FCV Strategy is expected to succeed even more in supporting governments and the private sector in capacity building and the planning and implementation of projects.

### Lessons Learned

The World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025 reported **key lessons learned about FCV**:

#### First: A proactive approach

The WBG's work has evolved from a focus on post-conflict reconstruction to addressing challenges across the full spectrum of fragility. This introduced a major shift in how the WBG conceived fragility, highlighting that fragility-related challenges cannot be resolved by short-term or partial solutions in the absence of institutions that provide people with security, justice, and jobs. It is necessary that the strategies become more adaptive and resilient in times of conflict, providing more tailored support depending on legal, financial, cultural, and historical contexts and settings. This definitely requires changing the already adopted approach of addressing FCV.

International reports emphasized the close link between security, justice, and development. The 2018 joint UN-WBG report, "Pathways for Peace", called on the WBG to "pivot to prevention" by further prioritizing inclusive approaches to development that can help prevent and mitigate FCV risks before conflict and violence take hold.

#### Second: WBG Framework for Development Interventions

The WBG should approach its development engagement with a sense of realism. Ultimately, conflicts are resolved by political and security actors through political processes, and even the best development strategy or program cannot win a war or ensure peace. Nonetheless, development interventions can help address FCV drivers and yield meaningful results in FCV settings.

#### Third: Reality before Evidence

Programs need to be better tailored to address FCV drivers, based on FCV tools and analytics. In many cases, Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCDs) of FCS countries have not looked markedly different from those in non-FCS. Thus, programs should focus more on regional and local FCV drivers, and translate them into priorities.

Interestingly, crisis-related operations tend to perform well, likely because they are (focused), simple, and realistic. In some FCV settings, it can be impossible to plan accurately over a standard five-year project time



horizon. Projects in fluid environments need built-in flexibility that allows for rapid adaptation to changing circumstances.

#### **Fourth: Tailored Financing**

WBG financing arrangements should be calibrated to the specific needs of FCV settings, far from the traditional approach to aid effectiveness, in which countries with low institutional capacity received little finance, which has at times limited the WBG's effectiveness. Improvements to project performance can come indirectly through better strategies and programming, a stronger on-the-ground presence, and simpler and more pragmatic projects. \$14 billion were provided by international financial institutions (IFIs) for IDA-eligible countries. IFC is committed to increasing the share of investment commitments in IDA and FCS to 40% by Fiscal Year (FY2030), with 15-20% in low-income FCS countries.

#### **Fifth: The Importance of Governance**

Good governance is important in addressing FCV challenges. The effectiveness of FCV programming in any sector, from health and education to agriculture and jobs, will be realized only if a country's underlying governance is sufficiently robust and inclusive. Governance weaknesses tend to be key chronic

drivers of FCV. The WBG should therefore focus on improving governance over the long term, by enhancing citizen security, strengthening the rule of law, building systems of accountability, supporting service systems, and fostering citizen engagement.

Progress in governance may not be linear, but the effort is a worthy investment in future resilience and stability. It can help to build legitimacy and trust in institutions, address FCV drivers, and mend the social contract.

#### **Sixth: Enhancing Operational Flexibilities and Staff Capabilities**

It is important to support WBG staff working in FCV settings, and enhance their capacities. Having the right staff on the ground is essential for effectiveness and project performance. Resident staff are more capable of understanding the political economy, and provide proactive support to clients in preparing and implementing operations. However, the WBG has struggled to attract staff to work in FCS, and there remains an impression among staff that working in FCS countries is not always career-enhancing. Nonetheless, the staffing footprint in FCS has increased significantly in recent years. Moreover, staff working in or on FCV need to feel that WBG

management recognizes and values their efforts in these tough environments.

To stay relevant, operational approaches must be changed and updated. Within contentious circumstances such as humanitarian disasters or forced displacement situations, FCS increasingly engages with non-state, civil society, military, or security actors. In this regard, the WBG should provide clear policies and plans to its employees in order to ensure knowledge and stability in volatile times.

#### **Seventh: Risk Mitigation**

Addressing FCV entails huge risks that are difficult to mitigate collectively. Besides, further risks may arise over the course of project implementation, which may require clear, comprehensive, preemptive approaches to risk mitigation and anticipation. WBG engagement in FCV settings entails higher costs, since it requires new investments in data, analytics, security, and collaboration with partners. These factors create budgetary pressures.

#### **Eighth: Effective Partnerships**

Partnerships aiming to address FCV are critical, particularly when they are mission-driven and grounded in the comparative advantages of each partner of civil society organizations, the private sector, donors, development banks, and UN agencies. Partnerships take time and effort, involve huge costs, and require serious observation to generate results greater than the sum of the contributions of each partner.

#### **Ninth: Updated Data**

Engaging in FCV settings requires working differently with data. In these settings, the data environment is often weak. But there are now innovative ways to

collect data or draw on partners' datasets. In recent years, digital solutions have emerged to address data challenges, but overall, teams need to think differently about monitoring and evaluation in FCV settings. It is equally important to support governments over the long term in improving their data environment for evidence-based policy making.

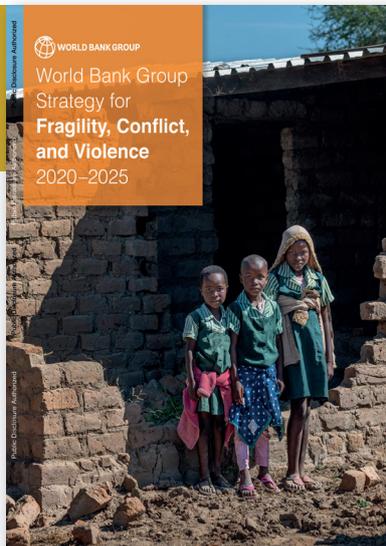
#### **Tenth: Private Sector Contribution**

The private sector is affected significantly by FCV settings despite its importance as a source of growth, jobs, and social resilience. However, higher costs of doing business, skills shortages, lack of the rule of law, poor infrastructure and supply chains, and dealing with significant financial risks, such as illegal activities, corruption, and bribery, as well as social and environmental risks, all pose significant challenges to promoting a healthy private sector in FCV settings.

Subsequently, the WBG has launched a number of initiatives, including the Conflict-Affected States in Africa (CASA) initiative in 2008, aimed to help Africa's FCS countries rebuild their private sectors, provide employment opportunities, and attract investments. Supported by Ireland, the Netherlands, and Norway, CASA initially rolled out in four countries, then expanded in 13 African countries.

CASA now focuses on the Sahel Region, Lake Chad, and the Horn of Africa, and is helping address regional and subregional conflict dynamics. CASA's experience shows that three factors are critical for bringing sustainable private sector development to fragile markets: long-term engagement, market intelligence, and flexible financing. Having the team on the ground helps gather the right market intelligence, speeds up project implementation, and provides clearer communication with clients and stakeholders.





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