Addressing Global Securitisation through Locally-Led Peacebuilding:

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Sets a Collective Ambition for Human Security in Gaza, Ukraine, Myanmar and Beyond

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The world is experiencing an unprecedented number of violent conflicts, an increasing upsurge of military takeovers of democratically elected governments, a growing polarisation of societies, and an existential threat of nuclear war. Last year, 2023, saw a three-decade high in the number of conflicts worldwide. It was also the warmest year for our planet on record. Consequently, peacebuilding efforts face greater complexity across local, national, and international levels. Conflicts, once they have descended into violence, have a devastating momentum that is very difficult to stop. We bear daily witness to this truth as the horrific civilian death toll rises in Gaza and the international community shamefully fails to halt the killing.

Amidst this reality, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) - the largest, locally-led global network of over 250 local peacebuilding organisations - has brought together regional representatives of its 15 regions and expert working groups to foster critical connections, jointly adapt to persistent challenges, and strengthen concrete and impactful peacebuilding action. GPPAC’s International Steering Group Meeting (ISG) took place in Tokyo, Japan on 22-26 January 2024. Close to 50 members of GPPAC travelled from all corners of the globe to Tokyo for the first in-person ISG meeting of the network in almost five years.

The GPPAC Network emerged in 2005, when local peacebuilding organisations followed the call of late UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, urging civil society with interest in conflict prevention to unite their efforts to prevent conflicts and promote human security.

The GPPAC network offers a one-stop shop for the diverse priorities and expertise of its members operating at the local level. If the international community seeks insights that are comprehensive, intersectional and truly reveal risks and opportunities for human security, then analysis of local realities is crucial.

Today, the GPPAC network approach to peacebuilding is critically relevant as an opportunity to lead concrete and impactful peacebuilding action rooted in human security.
To inform decision-makers and relevant peacebuilding and conflict prevention experts, local peacebuilders of the GPPAC Network outlined their collective ambition for human security as follows:

- **Peacebuilding should be supported not as a project, but as a process.** Peace does not come overnight; but we know that prevention works, saves lives and is cost-effective. The international community should commit to and invest in long-term equitable partnerships with local peacebuilders based on their comparative advantages.

- **The expertise of diverse peacebuilding networks should be sought after to access inclusive and representative learning and knowledge from the local to national, regional and global decision-makers.** The international community should provide adequate political and financial support to peacebuilding networks, especially those led by women and youth.

- **Human security must be at the core of peace and security action.** The international community should stop relying on militarised responses to conflicts and advance conflict prevention action through strengthening local infrastructures for peace (i.e., early warning systems and women mediator networks).

- **Localisation means ensuring local leadership and intentional partnership.** The international community should provide access, tools and resources for local peacebuilders to inform donors and policymakers’ strategies and actions in the process of co-creation and through systematic engagement, as well as freely design and implement their own strategies and programming, without relying on donor and policy agendas.

- **Global commitments to sustaining peace and human security must be acted upon.** Before making new commitments, the international community should operationalise its existing commitments before moving to the new ones.

The GPPAC meeting in Tokyo was a timely reminder that conflicts will not end with weapons, including nuclear weapons. Peace is handmade by people who promote dialogue and a human security approach.

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