Approaches among academics and practioners to transitional justice often clash over the perceived incompatibility between simultaneously promoting peace and justice in the aftermath of conflict. The two overarching goals – building peace and promoting justice by holding people accountable for crimes – may seem contradictory because peacebuilding promotes reconciliation, while justice mechanisms prevent impunity but have the potential to increase division and animosity in an already fragile society. Nevertheless, transitional justice initiatives must include both peace and justice components, along with adequate political will, funding, local participation, and community buy-in in order to be successful.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone case studies demonstrate that peace and justice are really two sides of the same coin, and despite certain tensions, approaches to transitional justice that emphasize both peace and justice are the most successful in promoting peacebuilding, stability, and long-term development during post-conflict reconstruction. Peace and development are mutually reinforcing, and while transitional justice mechanisms are never one size fits all because they must take local context into account, it is important that transitional justice initiatives are structured through the dual lens of peace and justice in order to set the stage for sustainable development in the aftermath of conflict.

I. Transitional Justice Components

Transitional justice in a post-conflict society should include both peace and justice components. Transitional justice embodies four main elements; namely, criminal prosecutions, institutional reforms, truth commissions, and reparations/memorialization.[1] Criminal prosecutions and institutional reform weigh more on the justice side; they hold perpetrators accountable and ensure that post-conflict society is not subsumed by impunity. Truth commissions and reparations/memorialization are the peace component to transitional justice—they promote healing, reconciliation, remembrance, and a way for society to collectively air grievances, tell stories, and begin to forgive and move forward.[2] All four components are equally important in the transitional justice process, and each brings with it various strengths and weaknesses.

a) Emphasis on Justice

   i. Criminal Prosecutions
Criminal prosecutions for individuals who have committed crimes during a conflict can occur at the domestic or international level. Often it is best for local prosecutors to indict criminals and prosecute crimes at the domestic level because this allows a country to take ownership of the transitional justice process. When officials try crimes at the local level, this occurs through a country’s formal court system or through the creation of a special court or tribunal. Domestic prosecution of crimes, however, is not always possible for a number of reasons, ranging from lack of political will to the inability to conduct trials because a country’s justice system may be completely destroyed from conflict. If domestic prosecution cannot take place, war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression can be prosecuted at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Another option is to establish an international tribunal, as was done in the aftermath of the conflicts in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Lastly, hybrid courts or tribunals can be established, which combine domestic and international law. These systems strengthen the capacity of the local judiciary by allowing an international body to operate domestically in the country where conflict occurred.

Criminal prosecutions ensure that those responsible for committing crimes during a conflict are held accountable. Prosecution has the benefit of closing the impunity gap in the aftermath of conflict, restoring the rule of law, and building a culture of human rights in the aftermath of conflict. Nevertheless, criminal prosecutions can sometimes deepen divides already present in a fragile, post-conflict society, jeopardizing a democratic transition. For example, if a government starts to arbitrarily arrest people from a certain group for crimes committed during the conflict, this could create an atmosphere that fosters fear and retaliation. There is a danger that an entire group could be blanketed as criminals and persecuted during the prosecution phase in an attempt to stop impunity and hold perpetrators to account. Therefore, it is vital that prosecutions are done fairly, with respect for the rule of law. Nevertheless, even if prosecutions are undertaken in a fair and just manner, lengthy court processes have the potential to drag out the transition period. Furthermore, the threat of prosecution can even make some armed groups reluctant to negotiate or surrender if they believe they will be arrested when the fighting stops. Even so, it is necessary to hold perpetrators to account in order to make sure that a post-conflict society is not rife with impunity.

ii. Institutional Reform

Another method of combatting impunity during the transitional justice period is institutional reform, which strengthens the justice system and removes any components or people that perpetrated crimes during the conflict. Institutional reform entails correcting deficiencies in
a state’s justice system and government structure that previously allowed for human rights abuses. This includes initiatives that establish the rule of law, a functioning bureaucracy, democratic norms, and a culture of respect for human rights. In order to achieve these goals, reforms must reestablish or create a constitution, change discriminatory or inadequate laws, and root out corruption through the implementation of anti-corruption legislation and checks and balances within government. This promotes justice by fixing the structural problems in a government that may have allowed crimes to be committed with impunity during the conflict. For example, institutional reform measures during Liberia’s transitional justice process resulted in the criminalization of rape. This law was not in place during the conflict, which allowed perpetrators to commit a flagrant human rights abuse with impunity over the course of the civil war. Lastly, other institutional reforms such as police training and the creation of oversight and regulatory bodies are often necessary to ensure that government functions fairly and effectively in the aftermath of conflict.

Institutional reform is beneficial for justice sector development because it creates the infrastructure for future domestic prosecution of crimes, which deters impunity. In addition, institutional reforms rid the government of individuals who were complicit with past crimes by establishing vetting procedures for police and government bureaucrats. Similar to the pitfalls of criminal prosecution, the establishment of vetting initiatives and the purge of former criminals from government posts have the potential to appear as witch-hunts if not handled appropriately. For instance, after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the American government pursued a policy of de-Baathification during Iraq’s early post conflict reconstruction phase. As part of this policy, the U.S. government pursued an aggressive agenda of ridding the Iraqi bureaucracy of all officials who belonged to Saddam Hussein’s Baath party. While the intention of ridding the government of corrupt Hussein sympathizers was to implement institutional reform during Iraq’s democratization process, the policy dismissed all Baath party members, whether truly loyal to Hussein or not. This led to the alienation and exclusion of a huge portion of Iraqi society from the new government structure, further fueling Sunni resentment of the American occupation, deepening Sunni/Shia tensions, and emboldening Sunni extremists.

The example of de-Baathification in Iraq underlines the importance of establishing vetting procedures that evaluate individuals fairly, as opposed to those procedures that establish criteria for government dismissal based on rank or party affiliation alone. In addition, it is essential that new government structures are inclusive of members from opposition parties that did not commit crimes. While corrupt individuals and criminals cannot be part of transitional governments, it is important that members from opposition parties are included
in the interest of democratic accountability and legitimacy surrounding the new government. This highlights the importance of multiple stakeholder groups participating in the institutional reform process.

b) Emphasis on Peace

iii. Truth Commissions

On the peacebuilding side of transitional justice, truth commissions are vitally important because they establish a platform for survivors to tell their stories in order to create a historical record surrounding the truth about a conflict. In certain instances, truth commissions also present a forum for perpetrators of crimes to speak out and ask victims for forgiveness. By bringing perpetrators and victims together to establish a record of what happened, truth commissions present a means to investigate and examine human rights violations in order to identify systemic injustices in society that need to be addressed through institutional reforms. In addition, this can lay the foundation for formal prosecutions.

Establishing a record of past injustices is important because it creates formalized institutional memory for society, which lays the foundation for peace by serving as a starting point for society to rebuild and move forward. The formalized memory is demonstrated through the creation of a public record produced by the truth commission at its conclusion; commonly this public record is in the form of a final report. Reports typically contain recommendations on ways a country can move forward; this often includes recommendations on indictments, institutional reforms, and/or reparations. The production of recommendations by truth commissions to use other transitional justice mechanisms demonstrates how the elements of transitional justice work together and mutually support one another.

Furthermore, some truth commissions are structured to encourage perpetrators to participate by offering conditional amnesty in return for participation, which can serve as a peacebuilding tool. This widens stakeholder participation, which increases the effectiveness of the truth commission by bringing people from all sides of the conflict into the process. For example, South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established in 1995, had a mandate that included providing amnesty to individual perpetrators who confessed their crimes before the commission. Nonetheless, South Africa’s approach has been criticized by the International Center for Transitional Justice for creating a culture of impunity in the aftermath of apartheid; when the TRC granted amnesty, the government could not follow through on the TRC’s establishment of fact and the identification of
perpetrators with criminal proceedings.\textsuperscript{[21]} While this may promote societal reconciliation by establishing a culture of forgiveness, the rush to build peace through the offering of amnesty ends up precluding the possibility of formally holding perpetrators to account before a court of law. In addition, even when truth commissions do not offer amnesty, they still have the potential to widen the impunity gap if the identification of crimes and individual perpetrators is not followed by prosecution or reforms due to lack of political will or lack of funding.\textsuperscript{[22]} Depending on the approach, truth commissions have the potential to highlight the central tension between peace and justice initiatives, or to underscore how peace and justice mechanisms can work together.

\textit{iv. Reparations/Memorialization}

The last major part of transitional justice is the establishment of reparations and memorialization. Reparations are important because their implementation recognizes victims as a distinct class of people deserving of special treatment to compensate for past injustices, such as the reparations established during Sierra Leone’s transitional justice process.\textsuperscript{[23]} In addition, memorialization—the establishment of an annual day of commemoration or through the creation of museums and monuments—can serve as an act of symbolic reparation to ensure that the crimes which occurred are never forgotten. Memorials and monuments act as a reminder and deterrent to the recurrence of future conflict.\textsuperscript{[24]} For example, the Rwandan government took this approach after the end of the 1994 genocide by establishing memorials throughout the country, mainly at the sites of previous massacres.\textsuperscript{[25]}

Reparations are a positive peacebuilding measure because financial compensation can help prevent survivors from wanting to resort to violence in retaliation for their former mistreatment. However, reparations and memorialization have the potential to be seen as an easy fix and a way to fairly compensate victims for past injustices. While financial compensation or the establishment of formal institutions to promote remembrance may help victims regain stability in their lives, it will not replace formally holding perpetrators accountable. Financial compensation or the establishment of memory cannot be equated with accountability.

\section*{II. Justice and Peace}

\textbf{a) Tensions}

Both justice and peace mechanisms can sometimes appear to be antagonistic to one another in the transitional justice process. Justice mechanisms, such as criminal prosecutions and
institutional reform, hold perpetrators accountable and decrease impunity in a post-conflict society. This has the potential, however, to heighten tensions by assigning blame and increasing division through the creation of an us-versus-them narrative that could materialize as a witch hunt against an entire group during criminal prosecutions or structural reforms in government. While justice mechanisms have the potential to promote accountability and lessen impunity, if not handled fairly and carefully, they could undermine the peace process.

On the other hand, peace mechanisms such as truth commissions, reparations, and memorialization, lay the foundations for societal healing, forgiveness, and a path forward from conflict by establishing a record of what happened, providing compensation to victims, and establishing institutional memory in the post-conflict society. Nevertheless, these approaches, if not followed by formal ways to hold perpetrators accountable, can leave a society grounded in fact, memory, and perhaps forgiveness, but subsumed by impunity. The rush to establish peace and bring society together can lead to quick fixes, such as monetary compensation for victims, or a truth commission that lacks follow through on what could be a difficult reform process.

While it seems as though peace and justice may at times be at odds with each other, they both serve the same underlying goal during processes of transitional justice: to repair society in the aftermath of conflict. While there can be tension between holding perpetrators accountable and the desire to promote healing and move forward, both must happen in order to create sustainable peace. The most successful transitional justice processes include both peace and justice components because accountability and the creation of peace in society are equally important when it comes to conflict resolution. Ultimately, both are needed in order to complement what the other lacks.

b) Mutual Reinforcement

The four main elements of transitional justice outlined above are mutually reinforcing. Criminal prosecutions combat impunity by holding perpetrators to account and institutional reforms fix structural injustices in government, while truth commissions routinely identify both perpetrators and areas for institutional reform. Reparations and memorials, moreover, symbolically build peace by complementing justice and accountability mechanisms. As the case studies of Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone will demonstrate, the most successful transitional justice approaches in promoting peacebuilding, stability, and long-term development in the aftermath of conflict require all four elements of transitional justice, with an equal emphasis on building peace and establishing justice. This dual framework sets the stage for stability and development in a post-conflict society.
III. Democratic Republic of Congo

a) Background to Transitional Justice

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been plagued with conflict, violence, and human rights abuses for decades. Most recently, the Second Congo War broke out in 1998 and lasted until 2003. During this time and after the formal conclusion of the war, various rebel groups committed crimes and perpetrated mass campaigns of violence, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), Mai-Mai militia groups, and the M23 rebellion.\(^2^{2}\) DRC’s approach to transitional justice attempted to address human rights violations through the use of both peace and justice mechanisms, with the inclusion of criminal prosecutions at the ICC in an effort to fight impunity and the establishment of a truth commission to build peace.\(^2^{3}\) However, even though DRC implemented a dual justice and peace approach, building a sustainable peace has been incredibly challenging for the government due to the occurrence of multiple conflicts involving many different actors and human rights violations, along with the fact that certain elements of the transitional justice process were conspicuously left out.

b) Establishing Justice

In terms of justice mechanisms, President Joseph Kabila called for prosecutions at the ICC in order to hold perpetrators liable for their crimes and to address the widespread impunity facing human rights violators throughout the country. In May 2004, Kabila sent the ICC a blank referral that requested an investigation into the crimes committed in DRC since 2002. The ICC issued arrest warrants for rebel leaders on charges of war crimes, the inscription of child soldiers, and crimes against humanity.\(^2^{4}\) There have been successful prosecutions, including the sentencing of Jean-Pierre Bemba, the former Vice President of DRC, to nineteen years in jail for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and tampering with witnesses at the ICC, and the sentencing of Germain Katanga to 12 years in prison for crimes against humanity and war crimes.\(^2^{5}\) Nonetheless, the military commander of the FDLR, Sylvestre Mudacumura, remains at large in DRC, despite being indicted in 2012 for war crimes in North and South Kivu provinces in Eastern Congo.\(^2^{6}\) This demonstrates that criminal prosecutions do not solve the problem of impunity if a state refuses to arrest war criminals in its territory.

c) Building Peace

On the peacebuilding side of DRC’s approach to transitional justice, a truth commission called the Commission Verité et Réconciliation was established in December 2002 to
“reestablish truth and promote peace, justice, reparation, forgiveness and reconciliation, with the view of consolidating national unity.” The commission was responsible for examining political crimes and human rights violations that occurred throughout Congo’s conflicts, with a final report submitted to the National Assembly and the Senate. The commission submitted its report in 2007, and it helped establish a record of fact concerning Congo’s bloody history and past human rights violations. However, its involvement of victims, witnesses, and perpetrators was relatively limited when compared with DRC’s population size and the extent of the crimes committed. Today, human rights violations in DRC continue to occur, particularly in Eastern Congo. This demonstrates that in order for truth commissions to be most effective in building peace and deterring future human rights violations, they need to have broad support and participation.

d) Transitional Justice Outcome for DRC

As evidenced by continuing human rights violations, transitional justice in DRC has not been entirely successful. While DRC did take a two-pronged approach by using criminal prosecution at the ICC and the establishment of a truth commission, violence and impunity are still rampant, particularly in Eastern DRC where rebel groups have continued to operate. Most recently, the M23 rebels began an insurgency in 2012 and briefly captured Goma; UN peacekeeping troops were able to disarm the rebels in 2013. However, the continuation of rebel movements exemplifies the lack of success surrounding DRC’s past transitional justice initiative. This lack of success underlines the importance of combining multiple elements of both peace and justice mechanisms. ICC prosecutions and the establishment of truth commissions are a start to building peace and justice in society. However, in the absence of institutional reform and the establishment of the rule of law and effective governance, efforts at establishing a sustainable peace and long-term development are undermined by the continued instability. In order for transitional justice to be most successful, all four main elements of transitional justice must be included.

IV. Sierra Leone

a) Background to Transitional Justice

Sierra Leone’s transitional justice approach had more success than the post-conflict reconstruction in DRC. Like DRC, Sierra Leone implemented a dual approach to transitional justice, emphasizing both justice and peace elements. The process in Sierra Leone, however, successfully included all four elements of transitional justice, leading to lasting peace and stability (aside from the Ebola crisis) and thus far no major recurrence of gross human rights violations.
b) Establishing Justice and Peace Together

In order to promote justice, at the request of Sierra Leone, the United Nations (UN) established a special court in January 2002 to prosecute those individuals responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes that occurred during the civil war from 1991-2002. The prosecutor of the special court successfully convicted nine war criminals. Only one suspect remains at large, Johnny Paul Koroma, who fled Sierra Leone before his indictment. The experience of Sierra Leone’s special court was largely successful, and it included an effective outreach program, which garnered wide public participation. In 2013, it became the first court of its kind to complete its mandate. This experience demonstrates how criminal prosecutions can be successful in holding perpetrators responsible and establishing justice for victims when appropriate political will, participation, and funding exist.

In addition, Sierra Leone established a truth commission with a mandate to establish a historical record of human rights violations that occurred during the civil war, address impunity, respond to the needs of victims through reparations, promote healing and reconciliation, and prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and human rights abuses. The commission operated from 2002-2004, and culminated in a 5,000 page report detailing victims’ testimonies, a history of the conflict, human rights violations with apportioning of blame and the identification of individuals responsible, and recommendations on moving forward. Its recommendations included the creation of a new bill of rights, the establishment of independence for the judiciary, strengthening the role of parliament, and tighter control of security forces.

Sierra Leone’s truth commission established a record of fact and served as a platform for victims to air grievances and identify perpetrators. In addition, it allowed the country to heal and establish recommendations on how to move past conflict in order to ensure it does not reoccur. Like the special court, the success of the truth commission was largely due to adequate funding, the necessary political will, and active civil society participation.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone included institutional reforms and the establishment of reparations in its transitional justice efforts. These reforms, which were based on the recommendations of the truth commission, demonstrated how the different elements of transitional justice are mutually reinforcing and highlighted how peace and justice approaches work together during post-conflict reconstruction. Sierra Leone’s government tasked the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) with the implementation of the recommendations made by the truth commission on institutional reforms and reparations for victims. As of 2010, individual victims of the conflict, including amputees and
survivors of sexual violence, received reparations in the amount of 100 USD each. Sierra Leone’s government also took steps to engage in dialogue with civil society in order to increase public awareness about the truth commission’s report and efforts by NaCSA to implement the recommendations. 

**c) Transitional Justice Outcome for Sierra Leone**

Thus far, Sierra Leone’s experience with transitional justice has been quite successful. The country has not slipped back into conflict, and since the end of the civil war the country has established stability and peace. In order for a country to promote long-term development, peace and stability are essential prerequisites. The establishment of post-conflict reconstruction through the implementation of peace and justice mechanism in Sierra Leone demonstrates how these elements work together to build peace while establishing accountability. This approach to transitional justice emphasized four main components: criminal prosecution, institutional reform, truth commissions, and reparations. When taken together, these components of transitional justice have the potential to transform society and establish the stability necessary for long-term development.

**V. Approaches to Justice and Peace Mechanisms in Practice**

**a) One Size Does Not Fit All**

While it is essential that transitional justice approaches emphasize both peace and justice elements by prosecuting criminals, implementing institutional reform, establishing truth commissions, and providing the means for reparations and memorialization, approaches to transitional justice are never one size fits all. Although these four elements are important to include, the way they are incorporated into a country’s transitional justice strategy will be different for any given country and conflict. When a transitional justice strategy is designed, it is essential to take local context into account because different situations require different approaches. It is vital that the approach includes conflict sensitivity mechanisms in order to ensure that transitional justice programs do not deepen divides or worsen conflict by overlooking or misunderstanding a country’s society, history of conflict, or ethnic composition.

**b) The Importance of Local Participation**

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it is necessary that post-conflict reconstruction programs not only have local buy-in and participation, but that they are locally driven. There cannot be sustainable peace if the UN comes into a post conflict country and designs a
transitional justice program without local participation from civil society organizations, religious groups, political parties, and other stakeholders. Locally driven programs are essential for creating the community buy-in necessary to produce enough political will from the people to make the initiatives a success. While often it is necessary for the UN to play a coordinating role, send in peacekeepers, contribute funding, or provide technical expertise when country level capacity is lacking, it is vital that transitional justice initiatives are as locally driven as possible in order to create lasting peace.

c) Too Many Pieces to the Puzzle?

Some may contend that including peace and justice elements in the form of criminal prosecutions, institutional reforms, truth commissions, and reparations is not a realistic approach to transitional justice. A holistic approach may be too costly and difficult to implement because it includes too many different components. A country just coming out of conflict is unlikely to have the necessary resources to implement all of these measures at once. In addition, focusing on too many components at the same time has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of each individual element; too many pieces to the puzzle can result in inadequate dedication to each element due to competing demands.

However, while these concerns are valid, they sorely miss the overarching necessity of a holistic approach during transitional justice processes. The purpose of transitional justice is for it to be transformational. Transitional justice cannot transform society if the approach is piecemeal. While it is true that post-conflict societies are likely to be scarce on funding and resources, this does not mean that a country should skimp on its post-conflict reconstruction plan. It is vital that the UN and other donors increase their funding for transitional justice so post-conflict countries are able to take a holistic approach to reconstruction. DRC’s experience with transitional justice is the seminal example of what happens when a holistic approach is not taken. In order to avoid the recurrence of conflict, all four main elements of transitional justice must be included, even if this means that each will compete with the other for scarce resources.

It is, of course, near impossible for all the components of a transitional justice program to be implemented precisely at the same time (some initiatives take longer than others and some initiatives will naturally come first or will last longer than others). Nevertheless, in order to set the stage for long-term development, a successful transitional justice plan that is holistic in nature must be designed from the outset.
VI. Transitional Justice and Development

Establishing lasting peace in a post-conflict society is not only important for preventing future conflict, but also for providing the stable conditions necessary for long term development. Peace and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing: peace creates an atmosphere in which development can thrive and sustainable development leads to economic growth, societal well-being, prosperous livelihoods and other factors that lessen tension and competition in society. Underdevelopment and poverty drive conflict by forcing rival groups in a country to compete for scarce resources. Moreover, stability and the absence of conflict are a precondition for a government to be able to institute policies to foster economic growth. If a government is preoccupied with fighting a civil war, there will be few resources left for sustainable development. In the most extreme case, if conflict leads to state collapse there will be no government at all to provide even basic social services.

Furthermore, according to the World Bank’s World Development Report of 2011, violence is one of the primary causes of poverty because violent conflict traps countries in poverty by hindering development. On the macro-level, economic growth requires a stable environment in which individuals and firms feel secure investing their resources. A country decimated by violence, therefore, will not attract foreign direct investment, which will hinder growth. On the micro-level, when people have no economic prospects, it is much easier for armed militia groups to retain recruits with the simple offer of a paid salary, or even food. Because conflict and development are inextricably interlinked, the implementation of a holistic transitional justice plan has the potential to prevent the recurrence of conflict. This is key for development.

The case studies of DRC and Sierra Leone demonstrate this link between transitional justice, peace-building and development quite well. On the one hand, DRC represents a case where the approach to transitional justice was incomplete, and the necessary political will for the adequate prosecution of criminals and the successful establishment of a truth commission with wide stakeholder participation was glaringly absent. Unsurprisingly, DRC has slipped back into conflict, and it remains one of the poorest countries in the world today.

Though the Second Congo War ended in 2003 and transitional justice initiatives have been in place in DRC since 2004, conflict continues to recur. In 2012, for example, rebels in Eastern Congo began the M23 rebellion, and in 2014 fighting broke out between rival Mai Mai militias in North Kivu. These occurrences demonstrate that transitional justice measures have failed to bring lasting peace to the country. As a result, DRC’s development
suffered tremendously. According to The World Bank, poverty levels in DRC remain persistently high; as of 2012, 63.6% of the population lives below the national poverty line. Economic growth is slow, too—GNI per capita is an abysmal $430 according to the most recent data from 2016.

On the other hand, Sierra Leone successfully implemented a transitional justice plan that was complete with all four elements of transitional justice, combining both peacebuilding and justice mechanisms. Sierra Leone avoided a recurrence of conflict, and aside from the public health disaster precipitated by the Ebola crisis, it has done better in terms of development. According to the World Bank, as of 2011, 52.9% of the population was living below the poverty line, and Sierra Leone’s GNI per capita in 2015 was $620. In 2014, GNI per capita was actually at a high of $770, but the fall in the price of oil in 2014 resulted in an economic shock and a subsequent decline in output growth for the years ahead. Nevertheless, Sierra Leone’s lack of conflict and fairly successful development efforts during the last fifteen years reflect how an emphasis on both peace-building and justice in a holistic transitional justice plan can lead to stability and development.

VII. Conclusion

The approaches to transitional justice in DRC and Sierra Leone demonstrate that building peace and establishing justice are in fact not contradictory. Peacebuilding and justice components complement one another in the transitional justice process, and they serve to ensure that society heals through reconciliation and establishes accountability for the perpetrators of past crimes. Without both reconciliation and accountability, society cannot establish sustainable peace and move forward from conflict. Transitional justice approaches that include both peace and justice mechanisms through the establishment of criminal prosecutions, institutional reforms, truth commissions, reparations and memorialization are the most successful at building long-term peace and development. While transitional justice strategies are never once size fits all, the experiences of DRC and Sierra Leone demonstrate that a holistic approach to transitional justice, along with adequate political will, funding, and community buy-in, is necessary for achieving lasting peace and long-term sustainable development.

End notes

Peace or Justice?: Transitional Justice in Sierra Leone

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2. Ibid., 19.
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6. Ibid.
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Marli Kasdan

Marli Kasdan is a second year Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy student at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. At Fletcher, Marli is focusing on international development and human security, and her thesis topic is on the political economy of state building in Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Prior to Fletcher, Marli received her BA in Political Science and International Development from Tulane University.

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