

Annual Report

2019–2020





Top left: Senior Program Officer Kimberly Brown, Research Officer Paul von Chamier, Program Associate Nendirmwa Noel, Program Associate Paula Sevilla Nuñez, Senior Program Officer Michael Higgins, and a local contact in Addis Ababa, November 2019. Top middle: Program Associate Bojan Francuz and other participants in the Peace in Our Cities strategy meeting in Amman in February 2020. Middle left: UN Policy Specialist Lorraine Reuter, g7+ Technical Specialist Felix Piedade, former President of Timor-Leste José Ramos-Horta, and CIC Senior Program Officer Céline Monnier meet in Dili in November 2019. Middle right: Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone Michael Imran Kanu, CIC Director Sarah Cliffe, former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Annika Söder, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Alicia Bárcena, Indonesian Deputy Minister of Planning Diani Sadiawati, and a Mexican government representative gather at the first meeting of the advisory council for the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion in Mexico City in October 2019. Lower left: Pathfinders Director Liv Tørres meets with Minister of Gender Equality and Family Lee Jung-ok and Geo Sung Kim, senior secretary to the president of the Republic of Korea, in Seoul in June 2020. Lower right: Visual notes by Wytze Veenstra of the 2020 Innovating Justice Forum.

Letter from the Director



2020 has been a landmark year for the Center on International Cooperation (CIC), with the 75th anniversary of the United Nations (UN) marking an important moment for the future of multilateralism. Yet as we began planning the calendar of events and meetings in late 2019, we could not anticipate how quickly and comprehensively the coronavirus pandemic and the multiple, overlapping crises that have emerged in its wake would overturn many of those plans. COVID-19 has reshaped the landscape of our daily lives and working environments, even as it has deepened our commitment to our core values of peace, justice, and inclusion—and our mission of supporting evidence-based policymaking and multilateral engagement.

The COVID-19 economic shock is the deepest since World War II and the broadest since 1870. The pandemic has made in-person diplomacy and peace negotiations difficult, while leading to conflict drivers such as sudden economic shocks and widening inequality. Yet there is cause for hope. Opinion polls in all regions show a high demand for more national and international collective action—people have been reminded of the importance of governments, institutions, and multilateral cooperation. The scope of the crisis offers an opportunity to build back better: strengthening multilateralism and linking health and humanitarian responses with long-term investment in development and sustaining peace. The pandemic has taught us that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

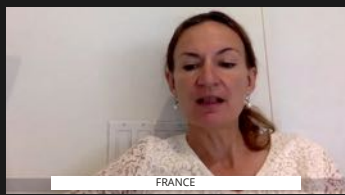
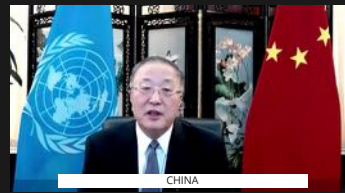
In this difficult year, CIC has adapted existing programs to support cooperative approaches to COVID-19 among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community—for example, sponsoring a series of discussions on COVID-19-macroeconomic-conflict links between the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and the World Bank. Our staff have worked incredibly hard to deliver an unprecedented volume of rapid policy analysis focused on the interface between COVID-19 and our core mission of preventing conflicts and crises and fostering peace, justice, and inclusion.

Meanwhile, our work has also been successful in informing the policy debate on issues where we have been engaged over the long term, ranging from the UN peacebuilding architecture review and gender parity strategy to the peace process in Afghanistan and efforts to ensure political stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies welcomed a new director, Liv Tørres, and eight new member states, while advancing the work of the Justice for All campaign, deepening the research agenda of the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion, and launching a new movement to halve global violence.

CIC remains deeply grateful to our partners and donors who support us in this essential work.

Sarah Cliffe
Director, NYU CIC

A handwritten signature of Sarah Cliffe in black ink.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings and events went virtual. Here are some of the faces that joined us for major events this year, including: the High-level Open Debate of the UN Security Council on “Pandemics and the Challenges of Sustaining Peace” on August 12, at which CIC Director Sarah Cliffe provided a briefing; the “High-level Event on COVID-19 and the role of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Building Resilience and Sustaining Social Cohesion and Peace,” organized by the Netherlands, the g7+, and CIC on September 24; and “The Challenge of a Lifetime: Ensuring Universal Access to COVID-19 Health Technologies,” a high-level event on September 25 hosted by the president of Costa Rica and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization, UNAIDS, and Pathfinders.



CIC Responds to COVID-19

As the pandemic reshaped the world we live and work in, CIC has adapted in turn, pivoting to develop and share policy-relevant analysis on the intersections between the pandemic and our ongoing core mission.

When the novel coronavirus began to spread across the globe in January and February of this year, CIC staff and partners acted quickly to plan for the potential effects of the pandemic. CIC has maintained our core mission of advancing effective multilateral action to prevent conflicts and crises and to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. We are not a public health organization—we felt our efforts were best focused on the pandemic’s secondary impacts on equality and inclusion, peace and political stability, and access to justice.

CIC therefore reworked policy development and research agendas and communications plans to include the impact of COVID-19. Since March, staff and fellows have published more than 60 pieces of rapid-response analysis on the pandemic, including blogs, policy briefings, and reports, as well as opinion and analysis pieces published in *The Lancet*, *Foreign Policy*, *World Politics Review*, and *The Mail & Guardian*. We also worked across CIC to develop a series of weekly and monthly advance briefings shared directly with a select list of partners at missions, in capitals, and among policymaking circles.

CIC used its convening power to inform national and international policy responses, supporting a coalition of countries demanding equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, collaborating with member states on solutions to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, mobilizing the Justice for All community to respond to the justice issues raised by lockdowns and quarantines, and engaging directly with UN bodies on ways to ensure that conflict prevention was included in pandemic response.

CIC adapted by frontloading research, using more local partners, and transitioning to virtual platforms for events. We found virtual platforms more effective than expected and will continue to use them in future. The summer and fall of 2020 saw the first virtual High-level Political Forum and United Nations General Assembly, experiences that illuminated new models for diplomatic engagement. While these online meetings have their advantages—from reduced environmental impact to ease of participation for those who might not have been able to attend in person—they also narrowed the scope for informal dialogue and interaction.

The pandemic also put strains on our internal organization. In mid-March, CIC’s office at New York University closed and colleagues there transitioned to remote work. As CIC’s New York-based staff bore witness to the impact of the virus on the city throughout the spring, they rose to the challenge of adapting to virtual working methods while dealing with concerns ranging from personal or family illness to economic strain. Despite these challenges, CIC has expanded internal training sessions this year and launched improvements in financial management and diversity and inclusion. We are grateful for the hard work and persistence of our staff.

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies

In 2019–20, the Pathfinders welcomed eight new member states: Uruguay, Peru, Portugal, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Ireland, Cape Verde, and Denmark.

CIC hosts the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, a group of UN member states, international organizations, global partnerships, civil society, and private sector actors working to accelerate the delivery of the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+).

This year, the number of Pathfinder countries rose to 38, and in spite of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pathfinders continued to promote accelerated implementation of the SDG16+ targets. In late 2019 and early 2020, Pathfinders saw the establishment of a ministerial-level advisory council to provide political steering and guidance to the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion; the launch of the Shared Strategy for Justice for All bringing together partners around national action, international support, and mobilization for justice for all; and the creation of the Grand Challenge on Violence Reduction, which aims to build a movement to halve global violence. The Pathfinders provided input for the UN75 Declaration deliberations and the UN75 report, with key policy suggestions in the areas of violence reduction and inequality and exclusion. The Pathfinders also played an active part in mobilizing the SDG16+ community to put SDG16+ at the heart of COVID-19 recovery and response and the UN's Decade of Action for the SDGs, with a statement endorsed by more than 100 organizations about the need to emphasize peace, justice and inclusion amid the pandemic.

Pathfinders for Justice and the Shared Strategy for Justice for All

In late 2019, the Pathfinders for Justice program and the Shared Strategy for Justice for All were developed to build on the work of the Task Force for Justice. Pathfinders for Justice works to translate the task force's recommendations into action and convene partners to mobilize for people-centered justice. The Shared Strategy for Justice for All 2020-2023 was launched at the HiiL Innovating Justice Forum in February 2020.

The program organized an event on national action for justice for all in December 2019 with Pathfinder countries Georgia, the Republic of Korea, Argentina, and Sierra Leone. Launch events for the *Justice for All* report were also held in the United States and Timor-Leste. It also hosted a strategy meeting on justice for women with UN Women, the World Bank, the International Development Law Organization, Global Citizen,



Maaïke de Langen, Program Lead for Justice for All, speaks at the Innovating Justice Forum in The Hague in February 2020, with Liv Tørres and Allyson Maynard Gibson, QC.

The Elders, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Justice Canada, and the United Nations Development Programme. Other events included a plenary at the World Bank's Law, Justice and Development Week and a strategy meeting for partners of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The program developed a range of initiatives focusing on how people-centered justice approaches can help manage the institutional, social, and economic fallout of COVID-19, resulting in two Justice in a Pandemic briefings in April and July, a companion piece on grassroots justice with the Justice for All campaign, and the report *Justice for Women Amidst COVID-19*, published jointly with UN Women and other partners.

The Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion

In October 2019, Mexico City hosted the first meeting of the advisory council of the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion. The ministerial-level advisory council is co-convened by the governments of Sweden, Indonesia, and Tunisia, with members from other countries and civil society and multilateral representatives, and acts as a political steering group and strategic guide for the goal of reducing inequality and exclusion through policies centered on recognition and redistribution. In November 2019, Pathfinders staff traveled to Ethiopia to meet with government and civil society representatives, as part of a program of country visits to help deliver SDG16+ and to promote inclusive national development efforts.

Over the past year, key experts in the field have produced research and publications on political inclusion, fiscal compromise, the future of work, spatial inclusion, and social protection. The program adapted to support partners affected by COVID-19, holding virtual meetings on issues such as engaging civil society in recovery plans and government discussions with the IMF and World Bank on reform and recovery financing. At HLPF 2020, the program highlighted innovative approaches to social protection and the lessons they offer for COVID-19 response. It also facilitated a special ministerial meeting on issues of inequality and exclusion for input to the UN75 declaration. In August and September, the ministerial advisory council convened virtually to discuss how to advance equality and inclusion in COVID-19 recovery and develop the first draft of a bold, comprehensive set of policies for the longer term. These will be the focus of further research and consultation in 2021.

The Grand Challenge on Violence Reduction

In 2019-2020, the Pathfinders laid the cornerstone for the Movement to Halve Global Violence and continued to scale up initiatives to accelerate action on SDG16.1. A publication reviewing the evidence on effective strategies for violence reduction, supported by the United Kingdom, set out the scope of the ambition. Follow-up consultations with key partners at a virtual retreat held in partnership with Wilton Park developed a blueprint for translating ambition into action, which was also informed by publications forecasting the dividends of conflict prevention, future trends in homicide, and how COVID-19 might influence global violence trends. On September 21, 2020, we shared those plans with a global audience at the Peace One Day Live digital celebration.

International Day of Peace 2020 also marked the one-year anniversary of the Peace in Our Cities initiative. Since its launch, Peace in Our Cities has grown to include 16 cities and 22 partners from across the world working to reduce urban violence. The campaign has evolved into a platform for knowledge exchange and support, advocacy and policy influence, and advancing “what works” solutions. The Pathfinders also launched the Gender Equality Network on Small Arms Control (GENSAC) with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office. GENSAC brings together more than 80 members from the Western Balkans, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean to advance gender-responsive small arms control strategies.

This Year at CIC

October 2019

Pathfinders Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion holds first advisory council meeting in Mexico City

Congo Research Group publishes *Inga III: Kept in the Dark: How the World's Largest Hydropower Site is Being Negotiated Behind Closed Doors*

December 2019

Humanitarian Crises publishes *The Triple Nexus in Practice: Toward a New Way of Working in Protracted and Repeated Crises*

Afghanistan Regional Program field visit to China

February 2020

Pathfinders launches the Shared Strategy for Justice for All in The Hague, Netherlands

Pathfinders holds Peace in Our Cities strategy meeting in Amman, Jordan

Pathfinders first GENSAC annual conference in Berlin, Germany



November 2019

Prevention and Peacebuilding field visit to Timor-Leste

Pathfinders field visit to Ethiopia

Defending Multilateralism holds meeting on political and macroeconomic risk with UN/IFIs.

March 2020

Congo Research Group publishes *I Need You, I Don't Need You: South Africa and Inga III*

CIC launches "Perspectives on a Pandemic: COVID-19 Analysis from CIC" series

Afghanistan Regional Program begins virtual regional consultations on the peace process

January 2020

Pathfinders welcomes new director Liv Tørres

Prevention and Peacebuilding field visit to Tunisia



April 2020

Humanitarian Crises

co-publishes “14 human rights principles for protecting migrants, refugees, and other displaced persons during and after COVID-19”

Defending Multilateralism

hosts its first UN-IFI country dialogue

Pathfinders

launches the “Justice in a Pandemic” briefing series

June 2020

Defending Multilateralism

announces upcoming launch of UN Senior Leadership Appointments Dashboard

Prevention and Peacebuilding

submits recommendations to the UN peacebuilding review

Pathfinders field visit to the Republic of Korea

July 2020

Prevention and Peacebuilding

publishes *Adopting a Sustaining Peace Lens to the COVID-19 Response*

Pathfinders

holds expert-level virtual workshop at Wilton Park on the Movement to Halve Global Violence

Humanitarian Crises

publishes *Unparalleled: COVID-19 and the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen*



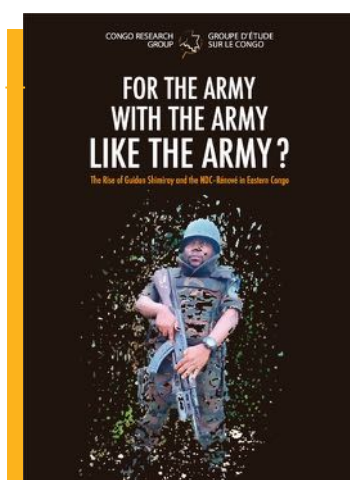
May 2020

Prevention and Peacebuilding organizes virtual workshop on COVID-19 and peace

Congo Research Group

founder contributes to “COVID-19 on the African Continent” correspondence in *The Lancet*

CRG publishes report on the armed group NDC-R



August 2020

CIC director briefs the UN Security Council on COVID-19 and conflict risk

Pathfinders holds a virtual meeting of the advisory council for the Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion

September 2020

Pathfinders launches the Movement to Halve Global Violence at Peace One Day Live

CIC and Pathfinders organize high-level event on access to COVID-19 vaccines with Costa Rica, World Health Organization, and UNAIDS

CRG publishes *Ebola in the DRC: The Perverse Effects of a Parallel Health System*

Facing page: Senior Program Officer Michael Higgins and Program Associate Paula Sevilla Nuñez visit a Productive Safety Net Program in Ethiopia in November 2019; Program Associate Bojan Francuz joins members of the Gender Equality Network on Small Arms Control at their first annual conference in Berlin in February 2020.

Defending and Promoting Multilateralism

In the UN's 75th year, CIC deepened its work to defend and promote multilateralism, focusing both on the challenges facing multilateral institutions, and their crucial role in responding to the crises the world is facing.

2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the UN, and the work of the Defending and Promoting Multilateralism Program this year focused on engaging UN bodies and member states in preparing for the 75th anniversary, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, deepening engagement with international financial institutions (IFIs), and supporting gender equality within the multilateral system.

CIC contributed to the work of the new UN75 Secretariat and the facilitation of the UN75 Declaration, which was adopted in September 2020. We provided technical policy advice on two priority issues identified by the secretary-general: rising violence and growing inequality and exclusion.



CIC Director Sarah Cliffe meets with Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa in November 2019.

Additionally, the program developed analysis of the pressures on the multilateral system given increased polarization and the fraying of trust in global institutions—trends exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. CIC provided rapid-response analysis, including briefings on polling data about trust in multilateral institutions. We have supported coalitions of countries demanding free access to COVID-19 vaccines and medical technologies, including through a high-level event hosted by the president of Costa Rica and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization, UNAIDS, and CIC/Pathfinders during the UN General Assembly in September. We are also working with member states on the financing for development efforts to provide proposed solutions to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic.

The program significantly advanced its work on strengthened UN-IFI collaboration, convening a series of country-level discussions on Lebanon, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea between the UN, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund to highlight the intersection of political and macroeconomic risks in light of the COVID-19 crisis, and feeding recommendations into the 2020 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review.

It also made progress in its effort to shed light on the gender dimensions of UN senior leadership, preparing to launch its UN Senior Leadership Appointments Dashboard, which will track leadership at the UN from 1996 to the present.

Prevention and Peacebuilding

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to unfold, the Prevention and Peacebuilding program seized the opportunity to highlight the need to integrate a sustaining peace lens in COVID-19 response.

The program's most significant engagement across the year was with the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture—a process that spanned the globe, with the goal of improving the way that the UN system delivers on peacebuilding. CIC contributed policy recommendations in three key areas: strengthening a preventive approach, enhancing collaboration between the UN and the IFIs, and lessons learned about the drawing down of peace operations.

In late 2019 and early 2020, the program continued its practice of field-driven policy research with visits to Tunisia and Timor-Leste. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and country after country implemented confinement strategies, it published a series of early analyses about the need for the public health response to be sensitive to conflict dynamics, one of which was published in *World Policy Review* in April 2020.

CIC then pivoted to look directly at the UN's response, conducting interviews across the system to understand if risks for conflict were being taken into account. The July 2020 report *Adopting a Sustaining Peace Lens to the COVID-19 Response* was the basis for an invitation to brief the UN Security Council on pandemics and the challenge of sustaining peace in August 2020.

This year also saw the launch of the new initiative on Data for Peacebuilding and Prevention (D4PP), which began with a global mapping of actors working at the intersection of peacebuilding and machine learning, artificial intelligence, and advanced data science methods. Looking forward, next year the program will continue country-focused work on improving preventive approaches and scale up efforts on D4PP.

Ines Kharrat and Walid Fehri of the Tunisian Office of the Presidency, CIC Senior Program Officer Céline Monnier, Slim Jrad of the Office of the Presidency, CIC Deputy Director Paige Arthur, and UN Desk Officer Loren Lepus meet in Tunis in February 2020.



Humanitarian Crises

CIC's Humanitarian Crises program asks how humanitarian policy should address the structural conditions that produce persistent crises—a question that has become more salient than ever amid the pandemic.

In December 2019, the program published a major review of the “triple nexus” between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors, helping to coalesce a consensus about the need for new types of engagement in chronically fragile settings. The findings have since become a point of reference among humanitarian and development actors at both global and country levels. The program has also been influential in reinforcing the link between humanitarian action and peacebuilding; UN Secretary-General António Guterres cited its work in his most recent report to the Security Council on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, interest in this analysis and policy advice has only grown, due to the expanding and intersecting health, humanitarian, economic, and political repercussions of COVID-19. The program has published well-read commentaries on the UN's humanitarian and socioeconomic responses to the pandemic, country-specific briefs on the political, economic, and humanitarian impacts of COVID-19, and rapid analyses of emerging triple-nexus concerns such as pandemic migrations and food price shocks.

The program has also helped reaffirm the critical importance of human rights-based approaches to the pandemic. A set of human rights principles for protecting migrants, refugees, and other displaced persons during and after COVID-19, co-drafted by the program, has been signed by more than 1,000 legal scholars and been incorporated into major UN policy frameworks.

In the coming year, the program will continue to strengthen and support new ways of working between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors, with a particular focus on contexts grappling with the triple shock of conflict, COVID-19, and the climate crisis.

*Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the UNDP Crisis Bureau Asako Okai joins CIC Director Sarah Cliffe and Senior Policy Analyst Leah Zamore for the launch of *The Triple Nexus in Practice* report, hosted by the Norwegian Permanent Mission to the UN in December 2019.*



Afghanistan Regional Program

As Afghanistan faces the twin challenges of COVID-19 and a complex peace process, the Afghanistan Regional Program combines subject-matter expertise and extensive networks to support diplomacy and inform policymaking.

The Afghanistan Regional Program (ARP) works through a blend of structured dialogue, applied research, and strategic outreach to support efforts to achieve greater stability in Afghanistan and develop understanding of the sociopolitical dynamics of the region. The program coordinates dialogues with officials and think tanks in Afghanistan, China, Russia, India, the European Union, and the US. In December 2019, ARP director Barnett Rubin visited China to exchange views with academics and officials in Beijing, meeting with Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui to discuss the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

After the formal negotiations between the US and the Taliban resulted in a US-Taliban agreement in February 2020, ARP focused on supporting the diplomatic efforts of the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, in collaboration with Norway and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The project also organized track 2 dialogues in support of the Afghan peace process to map out national and international positions and search for common ground. Starting in March 2020, ARP collaborated with the Heart of Asia Society, an Afghanistan-based think tank, in conducting six virtual regional consultations on the Afghan peace process, with several officials from member states participating as keynote speakers. The project goal was to discuss the possibility of a framework for the needed regional consultations on Afghanistan's final status.

ARP also produced several essays and policy papers on Afghanistan's internal political dynamics, the regional dimensions of the Afghan peace process, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Afghanistan.



ARP Director Barnett Rubin meets with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui in Beijing in December 2019 to discuss the Afghan peace process.

Congo Research Group

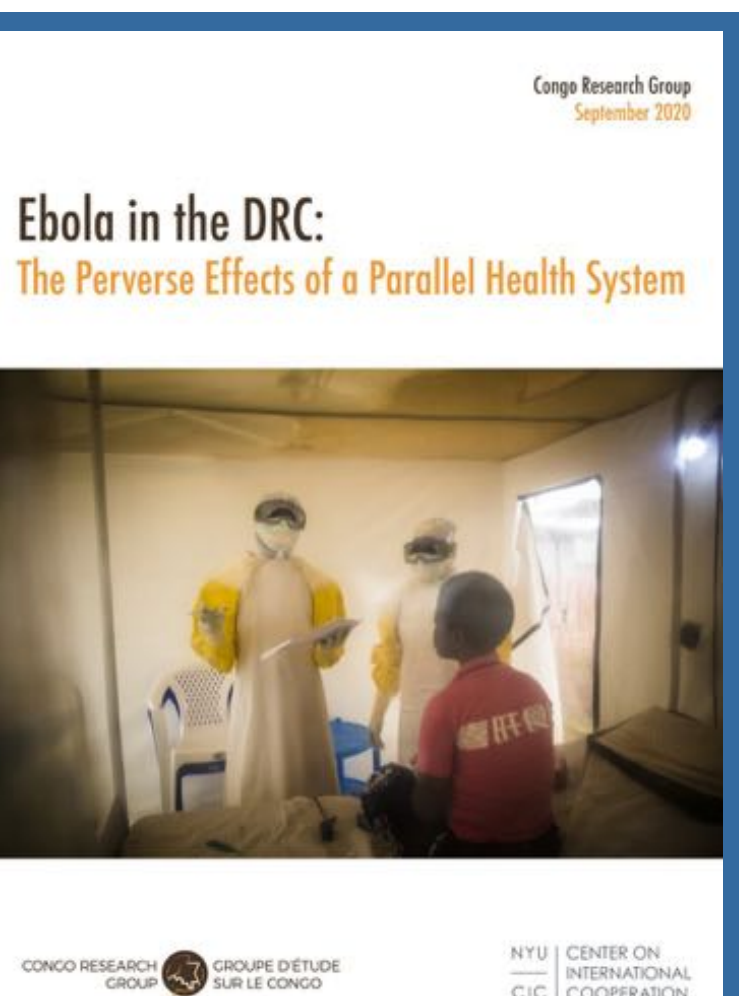
Congo Research Group (CRG) is dedicated to understanding the violence that affects millions of Congolese and the relationship between politics and governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In 2019-2020, CRG continued to expand its team, deepen engagement with the Congolese public and policymakers, and broaden the scope of its research.

Two reports on the Inga III hydroelectric dam on the Congo River, published in October 2019 and March 2020, marked a new phase in CRG's work on Congolese political economy. The first highlighted the lack of transparency and the questionable benefits of the project, while the second focused on the involvement of the South African government, which could become the largest buyer of electricity from the dam. In May, the program published a report examining the governance issues raised by the arrest of President Félix Tshisekedi's chief of staff on corruption charges linked to funding for massive infrastructure projects launched during the first 100 days of the new president's term. Another major report, based on 18 months of in-depth fieldwork, showed that the NDC-R—one of the most powerful armed groups in the eastern DRC—is part of a proxy war led by the Congolese army. In September 2020, CRG launched the first in a series of reports on the Ebola epidemic. *Ebola in the DRC: The Perverse Effects of a Parallel Health System* explained how the international humanitarian response to Ebola undermined the fragile national health system.

Throughout this period, CRG continued its work on the Kasai region, publishing regular analyses on conflict and political dynamics. The Kivu Security Tracker, an online platform providing real-time information on security incidents in the two Kivu provinces of eastern Congo, also continued to gain momentum, documenting 1,758 incidents involving 3,722 victims and becoming a key source for the humanitarian community and policymakers.

In the coming year, CRG will launch a major project on political governance in the DRC and continue its work on armed conflict and the political economy.





Pathfinders Director Liv Tørres meets with former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Seoul in June 2020.

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