

**Secretary of State John F. Kerry: Remove the Barriers to Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding organizations are uniquely positioned to help mitigate and end violent conflicts around the world. Because they are independent from government, these organizations are able to act as neutral conveners to bring all parties of a conflict to the table. This allows negotiations to take place in conflicts where political considerations can make it impossible for official government actors to engage with certain parties. But the ability for peacebuilders to do this is constrained by overbroad U.S. counterterrorism policies that make many forms of engagement with an armed group a crime if the group is listed as a terrorist organization. Offering training in negotiations or even teaching a course on humanitarian law to a listed terrorist group could land a peacebuilder in jail.

The Secretary of State can, and should, exempt peacebuilding activities from this counterproductive application of the law. The Secretary has legal authority to allow peacebuilding groups to engage with *all* parties to a conflict, so long as that engagement does not support or promote a terrorist's goals. Doing so would open the door for professional peacebuilders to fully engage in helping to end armed conflicts and suffering around the world, while making the U.S. safer.

The undersigned urge the Secretary of State to use his exemption powers to legalize such critical peacebuilding activities.

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