

## **Research, monitoring, and assessments: row summary**

Peacekeeping operations with a monitoring function show little or no average change in violence outcomes. One study of providing information to the public finds a large increase in willingness to participate politically. Evidence is mixed and overall low confidence.

Research, monitoring, and assessments are defined as any intervention that seeks to provide research, monitoring or assessment activity to develop a new or improved understanding of the drivers and risks underlying existing or possible conflicts or atrocities, with a view to anticipating or managing these risks. They could include research to understand the relative prominence of conflict drivers in a given setting, specific atrocity risk assessments undertaken using tools and frameworks, or monitoring missions to periodically assess risk factors underpinning a possible conflict or atrocity, e.g. fact-finding missions, or understanding the scale of violence present. These activities could draw on the single or multi-use of any form of data collection, such as traditional desk-based methods, survey approaches, analysis of secondary or open source data, or qualitative approaches. Activities could also be undertaken to identify or predict conflicts or atrocities before they commence, i.e. early warning systems, or whilst a conflict or atrocity is underway, escalated or subsided, to understand changes in context or key developments as they arise. In this evidence base, the category includes monitoring as part of peacekeeping operations and related civilian protection activities; monitoring and assessment of mediation, ceasefires, and peace agreement implementation; election-related programming that combines civic education and structured public discussions with community-based security monitoring committees; and ICT-enabled early warning and early response systems that collect, verify, and share incident reports.

Research, monitoring, and assessment interventions aim to reduce conflict and atrocity risks by improving the availability and credibility of information, strengthening accountability, and enabling earlier and more coordinated responses. Monitoring and assessment can support deterrence when information is credible and is linked to actors that can act on it, such as peacekeepers with the capacity to patrol, protect civilians, and respond to threats. In negotiations and peace implementation, monitoring can identify commitment problems, non-compliance, and implementation bottlenecks and can inform verification arrangements and third-party guarantees. In elections, civic education can reduce misinformation and fear, while security monitoring committees are intended to reduce intimidation and improve confidence in participation. In early warning systems, anonymous reporting and verification aim to reduce fear of retaliation and improve trust in information flows between communities and authorities.

Several findings point to limited or null impacts alongside some benefits. For the nature and scale of violence, pooled estimates drawn largely from studies of peacekeeping operations which include monitoring are very small ( $g = 0.02$ ), consistent with little or no average effect, and estimates vary widely across settings. Importantly, the underlying studies typically assess whole peacekeeping mission packages, where monitoring is not separable from other components such as troop and police deployments, patrols, mandates, and civilian protection activities. The summaries suggest that larger UN troop and police deployments are more consistently associated with reduced civilian

fatalities than unarmed observer missions, but these patterns should be interpreted as effects of bundled operations rather than monitoring alone. For diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution, two cross-national studies suggest a moderate average association with improved negotiation and peace agreement implementation ( $g = 0.14$ ), while also documenting constraints that can offset gains, including coordination problems in multi-actor conflicts and power imbalances that weaken implementation. For election-related outcomes in Liberia, one impact evaluation reports a large increase in willingness to participate ( $g = 0.25$ ) and a small improvement in political security ( $g = 0.06$ ), driven more by civic education and town hall components than by community security monitoring committees. The same evaluation reports little or no overall change in civic participation with a slightly negative direction ( $g = -0.03$ ), linked to the security committee component and more fragmented voting patterns. For government performance and for feeling of trust and acceptance of diversity, one qualitative study in Kenya reports improvements linked to an ICT-enabled early warning and early response system.

Confidence in these findings is low overall. Several outcomes rely on a single impact evaluation in one post-conflict setting, limiting generalizability and making estimates sensitive to contextual factors and self-reported measures. Although the peacekeeping evidence includes more studies and effect sizes, conclusions are weakened by heterogeneity and by the fact that monitoring is usually embedded within broader mission packages, which limits attribution to monitoring specifically. For diplomatic relations and peace implementation, the number of studies is small and effects operate through complex pathways where conditions that promote negotiation may still hinder implementation. The early warning system evidence comes from one qualitative study with limited reporting on methods for reducing bias and triangulating reports. Overall, the evidence suggests that any benefits depend heavily on whether monitoring and assessment are linked to credible capacity to respond and whether components inadvertently change incentives in ways that produce adverse outcomes.

**Effect sizes for research, monitoring, and assessments outcomes (ordered by effect size)**

Outcome	Effect size (Hedges g)	Magnitude classification	Number of studies	Number of effect sizes	Intervention details and nuances
Willingness to participate or help	0.247	Large effect	1	1	Liberia (2011 elections): civic education and town hall meetings plus related program components increased willingness to

					participate. Community security committee monitoring showed limited or no measurable impacts; combined programming still shows a moderate improvement overall.
Diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution	0.139	Moderate effect	2	15	Cross-national post-civil war evidence on monitoring and assessment of negotiation dynamics and peace agreement implementation. Average effect is moderate, but pathways are mixed: stalemates may open space for talks while multi-actor settings and power imbalances can still undermine implementation and raise relapse risks.

Political security	0.055	Small effect	1	6	Liberia (2011 elections): civic education improved voter knowledge and reduced fear of retribution; security committee monitoring produced smaller and more limited changes. Average effect is small.
Nature and scale of violence or atrocities	0.022	Little or no effect	9	44	Mostly quantitative studies of peacekeeping operations. Monitoring is embedded within broader mission packages (troops, police, patrols, civilian protection mandates), so effects cannot be separated from other operational components. Pooled effect is little or no average change, with wide heterogeneity (range -0.244

					to 0.334). Unarmed observer missions show minimal impacts; regional missions appear more effective against government violence than rebel abuses.
Civic participation	-0.030	Little or no effect	1	3	Liberia (2011 elections): average effect is little or no change but slightly adverse overall. The negative direction is linked to the security committee component and more fragmented voting patterns; civic education and town halls show more favorable patterns for voter coordination.
Government performance		Not estimated (qualitative)	1	0	Kenya (Northwestern): qualitative study of an ICT-

		evidence only)			enabled early warning and early response system reports faster information sharing, improved responsiveness of local authorities, and greater accountability. No pooled quantitative effect size was reported.
Feeling of trust and acceptance of diversity		Not estimated (qualitative evidence only)	1	0	Kenya (Northwestern): qualitative study reports improved trust and reciprocity between communities and authorities, and more inclusive participation linked to anonymous reporting and verification. No pooled quantitative effect size was reported.