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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

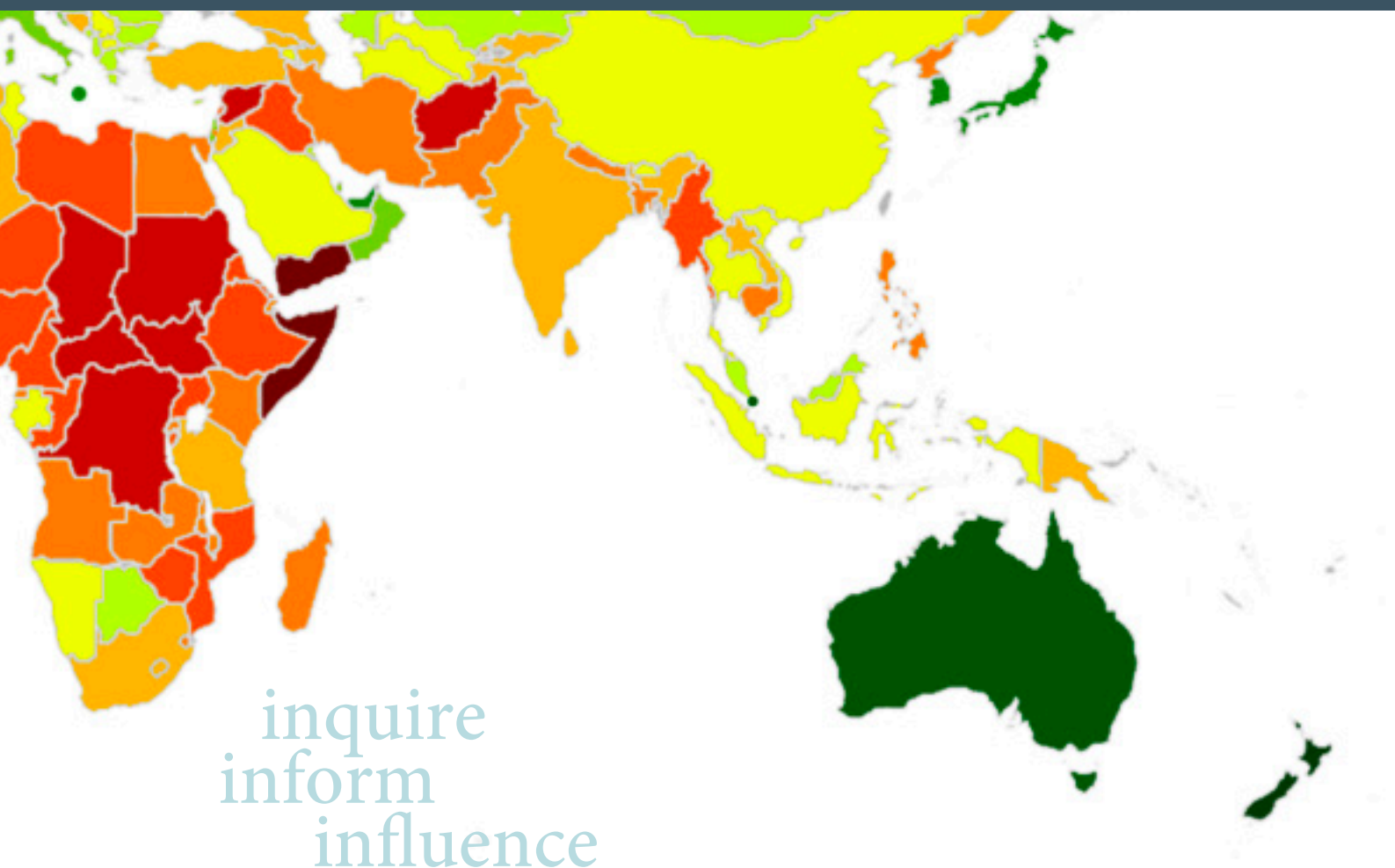
OTHER PUBLICATION

SEMINAR PROCEEDING

Wilson O. Thompson
Nematullah Bizhan
Osborne O. Sanida

STATE FRAGILITY,
LESSONS LEARNED AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR PNG

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The Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI) is an independent statutory authority established by an Act of Parliament in 1988 and confirmed by the IASER (Amendment) Act 1993.

PNG NRI is mandated by legislation to carry out independent research and analysis on development issues affecting PNG. The legislation states that the functions of the PNG NRI are:

- (a) The promotion of research into Papua New Guinea society and the economy; and,
- (b) The undertaking of research into social, political and economic problems of Papua New Guinea in order to enable practical solutions to such problems to be formulated.

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Opening Remarks

Wilson Thompson, ML, Chairman, NRI Council

PNG has a resilient society but we must build up the state systems

“The Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI) Council notes the important roles we must all play in ensuring that the Westminster system of democracy, with its established precedents and procedures, must be given effect because in Papua New Guinea, its implementation is lacking. If not checked today, it will contribute to the serious issues we portray with every elected leader and the systems that we employ including governance, accountability and transparency”.

A Seminar entitled “The Challenges of State fragility and lessons learned”, which is based on Dr Nematullah Bizhan’s edited book, “State Fragility: Case Studies and Comparisons”, looks at case studies from Afghanistan, Lebanon, Burundi, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea and Rwanda. The seminar discusses key questions as to the nature of state fragility, policies used to mitigate it, assessment of outcomes and prospects. It will also discuss 13 lessons for understanding and reducing state fragility. This seminar also discussed the case of state fragility in PNG and some of the lessons for the future.

The guest presenter **Dr Nematullah Bizhan** is a Lecturer in Public Policy at the Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University, and is a Senior Research Associate with the Global Economic Governance Program, Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University. He holds a PhD from the Australian National University, Canberra, and a Master of Arts (MA) from Williams College, Massachusetts and an MD from Abne Sina Balkh Medical School, Afghanistan. Previously, Dr Bizhan was a Research Fellow at the Blavatnik School of Government, and an Oxford- Princeton Global Leaders Fellow at the University College, Oxford University, and the Niehaus Centre for Globalization and Governance, Princeton University. He has published in world leading peer reviewed journals and presses, including two books. Before joining academia, he worked in senior positions, including Deputy Minister of Youth in Afghanistan.

Dr Bizhan’s expertise extends to his role as a visiting lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), within the School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP). I had the privilege of crossing paths with Dr Bizhan during my time as a student in the Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP) program at UPNG. His work and research left an indelible impression on me, rendering it an effortless decision to extend an invitation for him to deliver this seminar based on his new book.

The NRI is fortunate with a good working relation with UPNG including the Vice Chancellor on the NRI Council and our proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that looks at utilising our staff in teaching and research. We have Dr Lawrence Sause, Deputy Head of the SBPP, as the Convener of our Political Parties Seminar Series and the publication has been released.

PNG needs to learn from its past and current experiences, and as per the Seminar deliberations, the elections and its conduct can impact State legitimacy. The NRI is continuing to work with various actors in the field to contribute to a safe and secured society with healthy and wealthy citizens as per Vision 2050.

The 2022 Elections Observation Report done by various organisations including National Research Institute was presented last week (October 2022) and attended by Hon. Allan Bird, Hon. Sir Puka Temu from the Special Parliamentary Committee on Review on Elections; Hon. Mugua Dilu, MP, Vice Minister for Constitutional Offices; Simon Sinai, Electoral Commissioner; Correctional Service Commissioner Stephen Pokanis; Ivan Pomaleu, Secretary for Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council; various government representatives; political parties; New Zealand High Commissioner; and representatives from United Nations Office, Australian High Commission, and European Union Office, among others.

PNG NRI will work with the Executive government and also the legislature through the Special Parliamentary Committee on Review into Elections to ensure that the next Local Level Government (LLG) and National Elections must

not repeat the many concerns and issues highlighted by various Observation Reports for 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2022 Elections.

The National Research Institute will continue its monthly seminar series to bring in experts from within PNG and overseas to discuss prevailing challenges and opportunities. In view of the recently concluded elections and concerns on its conduct and issues confronting the country in relation to security issues, violence and legitimacy of elections, NRI is continuing to bring everyone to discuss and find solutions.

I am confident that this seminar will illuminate the concepts of 'Failed States' and 'Fragile States' and provide valuable insights to where Papua New Guinea (PNG) stands within this context. As many have previously suggested, there has been concerns that PNG might be headed towards the classification of a failed state. However, this presentation is undeniably paving the way for us to comprehend these notions better, enabling us to assess our current status through the lens of case studies and our own perspectives.

As I have often said, PNG has many opportunities provided by legislation for females or women to develop their capacity in decision-making process of the State and promote female participation in politics and ensuring their election to public office. For example, there is provision on most State Boards or Council for women representation and this translates further to nominated seats on every Local Level Government, Provincial Government and the District Development Authority. However, this has not been extended to the National Parliament yet in a country like Rwanda, it provides for certain number of seats that see many women elected to Parliament.

As the title of the seminar suggests, the lessons we learn may be applied to the development of our State, with the aim of improving our economy and establishing robust institutions capable of meeting the needs of our society. This underscores an important concern wherein leaders often overlook certain critical matters that could otherwise contribute to the enhancement of our institutions, ultimately benefiting society at large.

The NRI is an independent research institute and policy think tank for PNG as per its legislation to engage independently to promote good governance and better information and awareness to the people of PNG that would contribute in generating and promoting discourse and debate for a better and informed PNG.

(Editors Note: Dr Nematullah Bizhan's brief publications are appended at the end of his presentation)

Challenges of State fragility and lessons learned

Dr. Nematullah Bizhan, PhD

This seminar is based on Nematullah Bizhan's the free-to-download edited volume *State fragility: case studies and comparisons*

Fragile states expose their societies to the risk of meltdown or collapse, endangering the lives of their citizens, and leaving them unable to sustain ordinary life. When this happens, famine, violent disorder and economic distress can displace millions of people, with consequent impacts on surrounding regions. State fragility can also threaten global security by providing safe havens for terrorist groups and for drug and human traffickers, and by increasing the threat of disease pandemics and mass migrations.

By looking across seven countries – Afghanistan, Burundi, Lebanon, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Sierra Leone; this seminar examines key questions as to the nature of state fragility, policies used to mitigate it, assessment of outcomes, and prospects. It offers a novel empirical contribution by examining a range of distinct but interdependent dimensions of state fragility, not only focusing on questions of state legitimacy, capacity and authority, but also involving the economy, and resilience to political and economic shocks, as well as vital questions of context and diversity. In the seminar, we also identify unique factors that have played a part in their specific contexts and explores key drivers and dominant features.

We define state fragility as a situation where the state suffers from deficiencies in capacity, legitimacy or authority, which can also be associated with a weak economy and low resilience to shocks. In our work, we focused on those dimensions of fragility that seem to be proximate causes of fragility and are usually more amenable to policy actions; geography and history, for example, are not particularly amenable to change.

Since the emergence of fragile states as an area of great concern in the 1990s, especially in the fields of security and development, the term has evolved to offer a more nuanced understanding of state weakness and its consequences. However, the state-centric approach, which most international institutions have adopted to define or address state fragility, has been criticised for overlooking the role of society and local perceptions of legitimacy. Some scholars have called for a more balanced approach to incorporate nation-building in the process of state-building. We thus used a multidimensional approach to study state fragility, which accounts for state and society.

State fragility can be seen as a partial or heterogeneous concept. In the former, pockets of fragility and resilience co-exist; while in the latter, the nature of state fragility significantly differs across different regions of the state. The case studies demonstrate that resilience can exist at the local level across communities (for example in PNG), at the national level across different government departments (for example in Afghanistan), across different regions/provinces (for example in Pakistan), or even in different sectors (for example in Lebanon).

We argue that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work, even within a particular fragile state. A more nuanced and flexible approach, that is sensitive to institutional, geographical, sectoral and societal needs, is imperative. Fragile states can progress to a more stable polity, as observed in the case of Rwanda; can collapse, as happened in Afghanistan (August 2021); or can even remain stable for an extended period, as has been observed in PNG.

Attempts at reducing state fragility need to go beyond a narrow state-centric approach. In addition to state-building, governments need to prioritise nation-building and economic development. As these attempts may work against each other, a thorough understanding is required of the context, and a balance needs to be established between them. In particular, there are a number of priority areas that need intervention to remove constraints to effective state-building and development. These include the tension between formal institutions and societal values, the overall direction of public administration and state capacity, resource management and the structure of the economy, and nation-building.

Thirteen lessons learned about state fragility

Our research on each case study identified unique factors that have played a part in their specific context. While the country

case studies in this book show considerable variation in political, social and economic development, several consistent themes arise from them. They all recognise the importance of history, society, institutions, politics, the economy – and the interconnectedness between them – and the tensions that can arise amongst them during the state-building process. Thirteen common themes that stand out across the case studies are discussed in the following section under lessons learned.

First, in a fragile state, not only does procedural and performance legitimacy matter, but it also depends on the prevailing political dynamics and social structure. While fragile states lack legitimacy, effective government performance does not guarantee legitimacy. State legitimacy also depends on processes and perception of power by societal or ethnic groups and how they are organised, or in other words, how a society is organised and how the state and society interact. In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, improved delivery of essential services, economic development and security helped to improve the government's legitimacy and *vice versa*. But in Sierra Leone, government performance did not help improve legitimacy. Powerful identity politics marred Sierra Leone's political landscape. Similarly, procedural legitimacy through elections has limits and in the absence of minimum checks and balances and adequate institutional capacity sometimes can be counterproductive and suffer from fraud and irregularities. This situation in divided societies, and the absence of a political settlement, can exacerbate fragmentation and erode the trust of the majority of citizens in the State.

Second, considering whether adequate public services are provided and how much tax revenue a country can raise are indicators of state capacity; most of the case studies illustrate weak capacity, with variation across sectors and provinces in each country. State-building can exhibit limits for various reasons. The question of how politics is organised and appointments are made significantly affects state capacity. Both state capture and corruption seriously erode state capacity and constrain state-building. This problem is prevalent in environments dominated by politics of patronage. State institutions can also be used for personal benefits or for repressing opponents. A worst-case scenario is if the State is seen as a prize to reward political supporters or ethnic and tribal affiliates by appointing them to government posts and offering them favours. This situation will trigger a constant struggle for state capture, which can be rewarding for a few but lead to cyclical conflict, political instability and weak administration.

Third, institutional legacy and design also affect state capacity. In most of the cases in this book, the institutional legacy as a colonial construct has, by and large, continued with little change after independence. The cases highlight the problem of fit between these introduced institutions and the underlying societies and the power politics that accompany independent state-building. Colonial powers had imposed highly centralised bureaucracies along with the politics of divide and rule, which were then maintained by national elites; for example, in Burundi and Rwanda. This type of institutional and political legacy can undermine state capacity and legitimacy, increasing the gap between state and society, and making the state vulnerable to capture by elites or by a particular ethnic group. The incentive is thus high for elites to fight for state capture and for those in power to maintain such a power arrangement. In Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, state-building has been subverted by persistent attempts at state capture.

Fourth, while the literature on state fragility is by and large concerned with the lack of state capacity, the existence of state capacity can also endanger societies if the state apparatus is abused by the leaders, who neither face sufficient institutional constraints and nor are restrained by norms that discourage the abuse – for personal enrichment or to repress citizens systematically. The worst moments of Rwandan history were due to the strength and resilience of the state rather than its weakness. While the capacity of the contemporary Rwandan state to deliver public goods relies on effective, resourced and well-staffed institutions, it is equally valid that the genocide of 1994 is a bleak tribute to state power and capacity. Genocides like these are not possible in most weak states: they rely on potent capacities of mobilisation, coordination and control.

Fifth, the case studies show that nation-building is often overlooked in addressing state fragility. Tensions are observed between service delivery and state-building on the one hand, and state-building and nation-building on the other. They demonstrate that there is a tendency to prioritise service delivery over state-building and state-building over nation-building. A lack of balance between service delivery, state-building and nation-building undermines the prospects for building resilience and prolongs state fragility; it even can increase the risk of state collapse.

Sixth, three issues are observed concerning security in the case studies. The first one is that there is a lack of monopoly over the use of force by the state. The second one is a deficiency in the state's capacity to provide security to citizens. And the third one is that leaders abuse institutional capacity. While security sector reform has been pursued as a prominent policy in some cases to prevent states from collapsing and securing citizens' lives and livelihood, it has not achieved the intended outcomes. The

major impeding factor has been the capturing and politicising of security institutions by leaders and poor reforms supported by the international community.

Seventh, despite *de jure* democratisation and an emphasis on inclusive politics, the *de facto* arrangements in these countries are often even far from what North et al. call a “limited access order”. “A common feature of [such an order] is that political elites divide up control of the economy, each getting some share of the rents. Since outbreaks of violence reduce the rents, the elite factions have incentives to be peaceable most of the time”. According to North et al., maintaining the stability of these rents and the social order requires limiting access and competition. This type of order has a fundamentally different logic from the open-access order. All the case studies in this volume demonstrate that a limited access order is not a viable basis for social or political order in the long-run in situations of state fragility. The capture of economic resources and state power by elites or a certain ethnic group has not produced lasting stability. While a limited access order may have prevented a short- to medium-term collapse, it has either prolonged or stabilised a degree of state fragility. Limited access is challenged by those groups and elites who have been excluded. Unlike in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, globalisation has made access to alternative sources of information and the means of violence much easier.

Eight, the strength or weakness of the national economy matters for state stability and provision of basic services in fragile states. In particular, the private sector can drive economic growth and employment and can be a source of stability and hope. However, political instability, clientelism and lack of access to finance and infrastructure often constrain private-sector development. Corruption and insecurity significantly increase the cost of doing business. A blurring of the roles of politicians and businessmen also tends to undermine the private sector and economic development.

Ninth, most case studies, except post-genocide Rwanda, show that national leaders often overlook opportunities to build on critical moments of teaching or address problems sustainably. A path dependency is usually found in failing to build on successes. National leaders need to have a clear understanding of what an effective and legitimate state would look like and an accurate view of the realities on the ground.

Tenth, women relatively suffer the most in situations of fragility. They can be victims of discriminatory gender norms and practices, gender-based violence, weak institutions, lack of access to basic services, and exclusion from political and economic decision-making. In worst-case scenarios, the state can be used against women, or women become the main target of revenge by non-state armed actors.

Following the fall of the Afghanistan republic in August 2021, which had guaranteed the fundamental rights of women, once the Taliban group assumed power by force; it formally banned girls from access to secondary school and restricted women’s activities, reinstating a “gender apartheid”. During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, up to half a million women and children were raped, sexually mutilated, or murdered. The policies for reducing fragility need to identify pathways that can protect and empower women and improve their participation in political and economic decision-making.

Eleventh, the role of external actors in assessing state fragility is underestimated. In Afghanistan and Lebanon, state fragility has been deepened or prolonged by the intervention of regional states, Pakistan in the case of Afghanistan and Iran and Saudi Arabia in the case of Lebanon, pursuing their interest through proxies or non-state armed actors. Multiple external actors with conflicting interests often intervene, creating a balance of power among local actors, leading to a permanent deadlock (e.g., Lebanon) or a prolonged conflict (e.g., Afghanistan). Conflict and fragility also spill over.

Twelfth, international policies have limits in reducing state fragility. While aid can be instrumental, it can also have paradoxical impacts. As seen in the case studies, fragile states rely on foreign aid. For foreign donors, fragile states pose a national security threat. Donors use efforts to reduce fragility as means of mitigating such threats. However, as the case studies in this book demonstrate, external intervention has limits, and aid has not effectively helped reduce state fragility. Making aid more effective may depend on two crucial questions: whose priorities should be given the greater weight, those of local actors or donors; and how to deliver the aid – whether to work with the governments in place or bypass them. If local priorities are given greater weight and if donors work with recipient governments, aid will likely become more effective. However, the evidence shows that domestic legitimacy, international recognition and state capacity determine how donors allocate and channel their aid.

Thirteenth, the major sources of resilience in the case studies are observed to be societal at the community level, such as in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Lebanon and PNG, filling the void being left by the state mainly by offering informal social safety

or dispute resolution and informal governance. In addition, resilience is also observed at the sector level, such as the existence of a private sector in Lebanon, in the different regions in Pakistan and state resilience in delivering public services in Rwanda. However, the case studies show a relative lack of appreciation and intervention to enhance resilience and mitigate internal and external shocks.

Reducing fragility will depend not only on addressing sources of state fragility but also on building on the existing strengths and (domestic) sources of resilience across the state, society and market. While short-term gains are preferred in crises, a balancing act that can combine short-term and long-term gains could help sustainably reduce fragility.

Notes:

References and full text of the book can be accessed from Bizhan, N. ed. (2022). *State Fragility: Case Studies and Comparisons*. New York: Routledge.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Osborne Sanida, PhD, Director, National Research Institute

NRI support to build state systems and economy

On behalf of the management and staff of NRI, I acknowledge Dr Nematullah Bizhan, Visiting Lecturer at UPNG for the presentation: “The Challenges of State fragility and lessons learned” today and the interesting 13 points of discussion from the countries such as Afghanistan, Lebanon, Burundi, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea and Rwanda.

Our presenter lived and worked in Afghanistan where there are huge internal and external challenges affecting the State, including the concept of State and how it works with all the conflict from within and outside. Dr Bizhan’s experience of studying, working and living in different countries has made his contributions to international journals and books on the subject of State Fragility very worthwhile with relevant contexts.

We appreciate his work at UPNG and the opportunity we had to invite him to this seminar and look forward to engaging with him and other scholars to contribute to knowledge and research on PNG as well as providing the opportunity to learn from other countries.

Previously, Dr Bizhan has worked in senior public positions in Afghanistan Government and engaged with renowned institutes and has published well on State Fragility, including two books, and his experience working and teaching in PNG also provide valuable opportunity for more research and engagement in PNG.

From the presentation, we had insightful discussions on the nature of state fragility, policies used to mitigate it, and assessment of outcomes and prospects. It is interesting when it came to 13 lessons for reducing state fragility, and PNG must learn and adopt some aspects to improve our economy and society.

According to the presentation, the term such as failed and fragile states emerged in the 1990’s after the end of the Cold War but now ‘fragile state’ is used predominantly to describe the wide area ranging from weak economy, vulnerability to shocks, deficiencies in state legitimacy, authority and capacity that can create or contribute further to the fragility syndrome.

Fragile states lack capacity, authority and legitimacy such as to deliver services and drive development, and doing without recourse to persuasion, bargaining or force and ability of the state to obtain the consent of the population to the State’s dominance.

In PNG, national elections are a cause for concern, where the State has issues with the conduct of the elections and also the level of violence and lack of coordination and consistency in dealing with election issues. Such situations can cause or expose societies to the risk of meltdown or collapse or endangering the lives of their citizens and we must be careful to address such very critically now and in the future.

We hear that despite efforts to address state fragility, even by increasing official development assistance, more fragile states have been sliding back, or regressing.

Some important lessons applicable or necessary for PNG is to enforce state legitimacy where we cannot have certain society or ethnic groups exercising too much power and influence. We had issues with the National Elections but the exercise of Special Circumstances Declarations by the Electoral Commissioner needs to be reviewed. Moreover, delays in the election process from Issue of Writs to Polling to Counting to Declarations and Return of Writs can create potential for unrest and dispute over the total election process. This creates anxiety, suspicion and lack of public confidence in the election results and can translate into power play and conflicts as seen in many African states.

Also, we must be conscious on how politics is organised and appointments are made that significantly affects State capacity where in PNG, the importance of constitutional offices must be protected including the Public Service Commission so that appointments are not seen as rewarding political supporters including public works tenders and contracts.

PNG NRI has been contributing to research and policy on state capacity and reforms in the political systems and processes

to deal with effective service delivery and not political patronage and personal enrichment. Another highlight is the state's capacity to provide security to citizens and this has been highlighted during the Elections and must be addressed now.

Another important consideration highlighted is capacity of the national economy to ensure political stability and ability to provide basic services. We must continue to embrace the private sector as the driver of economic growth and creation of employment and business opportunities.

Finally, dependence of state on foreign donors and external support raises concerns about the sustainability of development and security in PNG, we must be conscious of not over relying on donors, aid, loans and support from outside.

As the presenter has empathised, policies for reducing fragility should start with a clear understanding of the prevailing conditions and context, and how success would look like and that not every prescription fits all as these can differ from country to country.

In closing I thank you all for making time available to attend this seminar and also appreciate Dr. Bizhan for the presentation and lessons we can learn from others and also put PNG on the scorecard with others in the region and world.

Recommendations to members of Parliament and Government

The purpose of the Seminar Series is to engage with domestic, regional and international specialists and practitioners to address specific areas that can lead to independent advice to the government, industry and society. Hence, the PNG NRI Council is cognisant of the important role everyone plays in ensuring the Westminster system of democracy, with its established precedents and procedure, must be given effect in PNG. Although we subscribe to the ideal democratic principles, the application and reality of implementation in PNG does not reflect the ideals and principles.

Dr. Nematullah Bizhan's presentation draws from his experience from his own country – Afghanistan, and his research on state fragility, development and governance covering different countries, including PNG. He has published, including two books, on the subject in leading international journals and presses and with reputable institutions around the world.

Papua New Guinea is included in case studies with Afghanistan, Lebanon, Burundi, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. The countries range from Pacific, Far East and Africa and for PNG, it is like a scorecard with countries that have engaged in serious conflict such as Afghanistan, Rwanda and Sierra Leone and states like Pakistan where the nature of state fragility, policies used to mitigate it, assessment of outcomes and prospects and 13 lessons for reducing state fragility. Dr. Bizhan and eight leading experts from around the world have researched on these case studies, which are included in the book.

What is state fragility?

State fragility is a situation where the state suffers from deficiencies in capacity, legitimacy or authority, which can also be associated with a weak economy and low resilience to shocks. As State fragility can relate to the whole country, it is a combination of many issues from the identity of the State, internal and external security issues, state of the economy, exercise of state powers and functions and authority, which can affect one or all. A country can be identified as a Fragile state when it lacks capacity (whether the State can deliver services and drive development), authority (the right or capacity to enforce order without negotiation) and legitimacy (the ability of the state to obtain the consent of the population to the State's dominance) (See Bizhan, 2023).

Although PNG exhibits resilience in its community and democratic institutions, it is classified as stable-fragile. In this characterisation, it's crucial for PNG as a nation to avoid exposing its society to the risks of potential breakdown or collapse. Such scenarios could jeopardise the well-being of its citizens, disrupt ordinary life, and potentially lead to issues like famine, violent unrest, and economic distress, which can displace a significant number of people. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for PNG to proactively prevent the conditions that could lead to a worsening condition. Achieving this goal hinges on a variety of interventions and decisions, with a commitment to safeguarding society and the economy always at the forefront.

Lessons learnt and implications for PNG to reduce state fragility

Drawing insights from the case studies in the book, State Fragility, 13 lessons or invaluable takeaways are highlighted that PNG can appreciate with areas for attention.

1. Not encourage ethnicities and group into language groups that can change or decide political dynamics and social structure where power can be exercised by certain societal or ethnic groups that may improve delivery of social and economic services but that can be seen as underplaying the ability or at the demise or detriment of others.
2. Ensure that National and LLG Elections are conducted on regular intervals as prescribed by law and ensure that there are independent minimum checks and balances in the electoral system and the PNG Electoral Commission must be given adequate resources and have institutional capacity to deliver elections so that the majority of the citizens and others have trust in the election results and outcomes.
3. Provide adequate public services in all wards, LLGs, districts and provinces on the basis of equity and equality and also the effective collection of government taxes, levy and charges as these are indicators of state capacity.
4. Ensure political parties and their activities are not ethnic or district or province based and any political party that does not have operations in say over five provinces or does not endorse more than 10 candidates in an Election should be deregistered.

5. Ensure politics is organised across the country and appointments to boards and committee and the public service are merit based as ethnic, language, patronage or other considerations can significantly affect State legitimacy and capacity as state capture and corruption can seriously erode state capacity and constrain state-building.
6. Not reward political supporters or ethnic and tribal affiliates by appointing them to government posts and offering them favours such as grants and tenders as this will trigger a constant struggle for state capture, which can be rewarding for a few but lead to cyclical conflict, political instability and weak administration.
7. Avoid politics of patronage in State institutions especially for personal benefits or for repressing opponents. The Royal PNG Constabulary and other law enforcement agencies and the disciplinary forces must ensure recruitment is open across all districts and provinces and based on requirements.
8. Review all legislations and policies prior to 1990 where colonial administration designed systems and institutions carried over may not be consistent with or applicable to current situation. For example, all ward and LLG boundaries need to be reviewed to change from language and ethnic groups to geographic and population spread or size to avoid clan and tribal rivalry and power play.
9. Review and de-concentrate power from highly centralised decision making and bureaucracies that can undermine state capacity and legitimacy, increasing the gap between state and society, and making the state vulnerable to capture by elites or by a particular ethnic group by moving public servants to provinces and districts.
10. Avoid the use of disciplinary forces and state apparatus, if abused by leaders, that endanger societies or to silence critics and the voice of the society.
11. Review the use of Provincial and District Services Improvement Program funds that are not building state capacity or community empowerment but used as service delivery and patronage that can create conflict between public servants and MPs staff and officers and also between voters and others in the society.
12. Ensure that the security sector or disciplinary forces and law enforcement agencies provide a secure environment for citizens' lives and livelihood and for business and societies to thrive. The capturing and politicising of security institutions by leaders and poor reforms such as downsizing of the security forces, lack of capacity in mobility and support and lack of response within 24 hours is a major concern that can result in State losing control including respect for its agents and officers and widespread lawlessness.
13. Review the process of recognition of landowners in resource projects and simplify and open the process of paying of benefits to the intended recipients. The system where political elites decide and control how resource rents are shared or distributed can create frustration and civil disturbances and even conflicts.
14. Encourage and promote the private sector to drive economic growth and employment and income earning opportunities and building the national economy for state stability and provision of basic services.
15. Avoid political instability, clientelism and lack of access to finance and infrastructure that can constrain private sector development and encourage corruption and insecurity that increase the cost of doing business and the increases in price of goods and services that can affect the society and undermine the private sector and economic development.
16. Use national events and moments such as lessons learnt from disasters, national elections, outbreak of violence to build or address problems sustainably. A path dependency is usually found in failing to build on successes, hence national leaders must have a clear understanding of what an effective and legitimate state would look like and an accurate view of the realities on the ground and deliver the expected outcomes.
17. Women or females are often victims of discriminatory gender norms and practices, gender-based violence, weak institutions, lack of access to basic services, and exclusion from political and economic decision-making. Therefore, all government policies must be gender inclusive including those who are vulnerable or impaired or disabled.
18. International aid and donors and external intervention must depend on priorities of the State and execution of the projects must be undertaken or supervised through the State agencies.
19. Promote the PNG Ways as a major source of resilience, filling the void being left by the state such as informal social safety or dispute resolution and informal governance.
20. Encourage all departments and agencies responsible for administration and conduct of elections to ensure elections are conducted on time and Writs are not extended at will and that any disputes must be resolved during or before the Writs are returned so that people have faith and confidence in the system of elections.

Reference:

Bizhan, N. ed. (2023). *State Fragility: Case Studies and Comparisons*. New York: Routledge.



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