

à propos

The KOFF
Peacebuilding
Magazine



What's Next for Mali?

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The implementation of the agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali, which was signed a little over a year ago in Algiers, has finally been relaunched. The signatory parties met in Bamako last June to agree on practical arrangements for the establishment of the interim authorities in northern Mali. This agreement is a significant step forward in the implementation of the peace accord that has been blocked for months. It will also, hopefully, enable the stalemate in which the country finds itself to be lifted. In recent months, there has been ever-greater disillusionment and violence has been on the rise, particularly in the north.

Despite this news, the path to peace is still a long one and the challenges are daunting. It is crucial to look beyond the separatist tendencies and the north/south divide to analyze and address the root causes of the 2012/2013 conflict and build sustainable and inclusive peace. This edition presents the initiatives carried out in the field by Swiss NGOs and their local partners to try to remove obstacles to peace. It highlights the key role of Malian and Swiss civil society in implementing the agreement, the challenges they are facing and the strategies they could adopt to find local solutions and advance the peace process.

Marie Seidel, editor

The Peace Process in Mali: What is to be Done?



Rue de l'indépendance in Ségou (2008, Mali). Creative Commons/ Hughes

Implementing the peace and reconciliation agreement signed in Mali in June 2015 is continuing to prove a challenge. Many details have still not been clarified and, at political level, the peace process is making slow progress. Meanwhile, acts of violence by extremist groups are on the rise, as is the number of violent conflicts erupting between and within communities. Aside from the need for strategic patience and international political pressure, it is essential to develop approaches at local level with the aim of injecting fresh momentum into the peace process. This is precisely where civil society has an important role to play.

While progress in implementing the peace agreement in Mali has been halting, other conflicts that are not dealt with directly in the agreement but are indirectly connected with it have been gaining ground. One example of this is the ideological and economic dispute between secular and extremist actors. The extremists are exploiting religious motives to further their economic interests (e.g. drug trafficking) and their attacks are increasingly having an impact on the security situation. They are also putting pressure on the secular parties from the north of the country who have signed the agreement. Another example are the conflicts raging between and within communities, which keep flaring up despite efforts to partially resolve them in northern areas in October 2015 through local reconciliation agreements. These hostilities, which are not exclusive to the north – they can be found in central (e.g. in Mopti, where the Fula and Bambara people are fighting each other) and

southern Mali too – are rooted in local contexts, but they have also been fueled by the weakness of some state institutions and the struggle for access to resources and sources of income to earn a living.

So what is to be done? Effective implementation of the peace agreement and cooperation between all parties involved, along with civil society and the population all over the country, is still the best course of action for counteracting these unwelcome developments. At the same time, it is important to develop approaches that involve civil society and the population as a whole in order to secure peace.

At local level, all stakeholders and external actors should use existing dialog and reconciliation forums as a platform for developing strategies to run schools, set up health centers, and resolve conflicts between and within communities. This could include, for example, a combination of small-scale, temporary reconciliation agreements and local development plans that involve local government officials, women, and young people as well as traditional and religious authorities. Local agreements of this kind, backed by support and assistance from international actors, would not undermine the political solution at national level. In fact, while building on efforts already underway to bring about local reconciliation, they would make it possible to meet the immediate needs of the Malian people, restore a basic level of confidence in the situation, and lay the foundations for national political solutions to specific unresolved problems.

However, measures like these can only be implemented if peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development work go hand in hand with a comprehensive understanding of security and if all actions taken follow a conflict-sensitive approach. They thus need to be based on a detailed and local conflict analysis that assesses the economics of local conflicts: after all, any measures taken are most likely to prove successful if illegal activities can be countered by offering constructive economic incentives as an alternative. It is also essential that such measures are not confined to the north, but applied to central and southern parts of the country too, where local development plans have already been drawn up to a certain extent but – depending on the region – have scarcely been implemented.

Civil society has an important role to play in championing this kind of approach: thanks to its convening power, it can help with negotiating small-scale measures at local level. It is in an ideal position to bridge the gap between the political process on the one hand and the needs and peacebuilding potential of the population on the other. Therefore, it should also be given a more prominent role on the Committee for monitoring the peace agreement in order to make it more inclusive and, ultimately, ensure that it is firmly embedded in society. Nevertheless, we should be wary of placing any naive expectations on civil society, partly because it first needs to be established who this civil society actually is, and partly because this civil society too is polarized by private interests. This therefore raises the question of whether and – more importantly – how external actors can support local civil society not only as an “implementer,” but also as an actor itself, driven by a vision and a strong sense of commitment.

If national and international actors want to prevent conflict, they also need to turn their attention to conflicts going on in other parts of Mali, such as the south. Here, too, relations between the state and society are often hampered by mistrust. Although there are state structures in place, most people turn to traditional authorities to find solutions to their

problems. However, these traditional authorities often reflect established local power structures, which give young people and marginalized groups in particular little scope for action. The deep underlying causes behind the tendency for young people to fall into violent extremism are rooted in social and economic realities and existing power structures. Preventing conflict thus depends on addressing these root causes.

Finally, all international actors must try to work as closely to the context as possible: contextual knowledge, flexibility in implementation, and finding creative ways of developing solutions with the help of the local people are all characteristics of a context-oriented approach. This contextual proximity poses a major challenge, especially in northern and central Mali, where any external intervention provides a potential target for extremist groups, making it even more essential to leave as light a “footprint” as possible when working in these regions. This is another area in which international, national, and local civil society can play a crucial role.

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reports

Impressions of a Malian Organization



Awareness-raising activities are going on, even in times of crisis (2016, Bamako). IAMANEH Switzerland

For some months now, a new wave of violence has been sweeping over northern Mali. Not a day goes by without reports of targeted attacks, either by rebels, jihadists, or criminal gangs – even, recently, in central Mali. In addition to UN peacekeepers, the main targets are local politicians and public officials.

The peace process has raised great hopes of peace and security among the people of Mali. Every day, the Malian television broadcaster ORTM publicizes information on the content of the peace agreement. Flyers in various languages are being distributed and the peace process is the topic on everyone's lips in the capital city, Bamako. However, this sense of hope is now giving way to increasing disillusionment and, to many Malians, the prospect of lasting peace seems to be fading into the distance.

When talking to employees from a Malian partner organization of IAMANEH Switzerland, many people have been complaining of the scant progress being made in the peace process, citing examples such as the lack of disarmament. They are disenchanted with their own government and feel defenseless: "We are even too weak to ensure our own safety." Others think it will take more time to resolve what is a complex crisis – one that began a long time ago. The main priority should be to deal with pressing problems such as issues concerning land and resources, corruption, and mismanagement.

In spite of the heightened security situation, local NGOs have been extending their work into regions that they have previously steered clear of, organizing project activities on "neutral" ground, i.e. in the villages. They are keen to avoid becoming pawns of any party, neither of the state, rebels, Islamists, the militia, nor the UN (MINUSMA). This is the only way to ensure that they can implement their projects without becoming caught in a crossfire between the various fronts and groups involved.

IAMANEH Switzerland supports its partner organizations in Mali on a long-term and sustainable basis – including in times of crisis, when aid and assistance are vital.

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- [IAMANEH Switzerland's projects in Mali](#)

reports

From Consensus to Action: the People of Mali are Committed



Participants at the second National Conference (May 2016, Bamako). Interpeace

“The road is hard, very hard, that leads to common happiness”. The Malian national anthem has never resonated more than it does today. Lying at the heart of the international agenda, Mali has begun its reconstruction. In order to guide international support, it was vital that the people of Mali identify and prioritize which obstacles to peace must be overcome before developing solutions for lasting peace in the country. This is why Interpeace and the Malian

Institute of Research and Action for Peace (IMRAP) have set up “An Agenda for Peace in Mali”, a unique program that engages representatives from all social backgrounds and regions as well as neighboring refugee camps in wide-ranging consultations. The aim is to generate inclusive dialogue, in-depth reflection and national consensus about the obstacles to peace in order to find and implement appropriate solutions.

The goal of the second National Conference entitled “Chronic insecurity, the evolution of values: proposed solutions for lasting peace in Mali” was to present, build upon and validate solutions to these two challenges, which the Malian people identified as key priorities for peace during the first National Conference. A true reflection of Mali itself, this conference draws its legitimacy from its inclusivity and representativeness.

According to a number of participants, the people of Mali are strangers to each other. How can the state be expected to rebuild itself in a sustainable way if its society is fragmented? In addition, how can the effectiveness of the Malian Security and Defense Forces be ensured unless work is first undertaken to rebuild the trust between them and the people? Far from being a rubber-stamping exercise, this conference is an illustration of how Malian people from all social strata are taking ownership of their peacebuilding process, both by validating and prioritizing solutions and by committing collectively and individually to implement them. The result is a peacebuilding process led by the Malian people for the Malian people which reflects the current realities of the country.

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- [Interpeace's program in Mali](#)
- [IMRAP](#)
- [Interpeace, IMRAP. A Self-Portrait of Mali on the Obstacles to Peace, March 2015](#)

reports

Dialogue and Information as a Means of Understanding and Reconciliation



At Studio Tamani. Fondation Hirondelle / Mark Elisson

Since 2012, there has been a real threat of terrorism in Mali. Extremist groups are perpetuating acts of violence which have already resulted in several dozen deaths. However, this deterioration in the security situation has not deterred the government and armed forces from pursuing the peace process. The peace and reconciliation agreement signed by all parties in Algiers in 2015 shows that, despite the difficulties and violence, it is possible for the situation to move in the right direction.

Studio Tamani, the daily radio program launched by Fondation Hirondelle in Mali in 2013, is part of these efforts to move towards peace. Its editorial team, made up of Malian journalists, uses talk and discussion programs to play a role in this process. With broadcasts such as “Grand Dialogue”, Studio Tamani breaks the ice between parties who had previously found dialogue impossible. It is the only media outlet that invites representatives of the Tuareg rebellion into its studios on a regular basis, thus enabling dialogue to take place between all segments of society. Studio Tamani has become an authoritative source of information in the country, especially on the most sensitive issues such as radicalization, female genital mutilation and the rights of women and young people.

With its editorial team of 20 permanent journalists and 35 correspondents across the

country, Studio Tamani is able to cover the country's current affairs every day, with comprehensive and reliable information in five national languages, making it accessible to as many people as possible. The growth of its audience since 2013, to 1.6 million listeners per day at the end of 2015, is proof that it is meeting the people's need for information. In the face of hate speech and violent impulses, the Fondation Hironnelle continues to focus on dialogue and reliable information as a means of understanding and reconciliation for communities that appear to have all the odds against them.

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links

- [Fondation Hironnelle](#)
- [Studio Tamani](#)

reports

Traditional Conciliation Methods for Resolving Conflict

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (HSI) has been actively involved in a unique local peacebuilding and governance program in the Kayes region of Mali for over ten years now.

The program has set up consultation forums, where alternative conciliation methods are used to mediate between conflicting parties. Based on this model, the government has been organizing land commissions involving state-employed mediators advised by members of the program since 2010, with government and non-governmental actors coming together to settle conflicts with the help of traditional conciliation methods. For example, Kotéba – a traditional Malian form of participatory theater – has been used in mediation processes to demonstrate different perspectives on a conflict or to investigate possible alternative solutions.

HSI, one of four international partners involved in the consortium for the program, which is funded by the Swedish government agency Sida, has been responsible for the conflict sensitivity dimension of the program from the start. It has trained the consortium staff and local partner organizations in how to apply its three-step conflict-sensitive approach. This is something that HSI intends to step up even further in Mali.

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has recently pledged financial support for HSI in Mali to carry out scientific research in relation to this work. This will focus particularly on

what traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are applied in the land commissions and how, and what effect this can have on the conciliation process. The lessons learned from this research may also be relevant to the peace process at national level.

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links

- [HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in Mali](#)
- [HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, KOFF. Manual: 3 steps for working in fragile and conflict-affected situations \(WFCS\). 2013](#)
- [Sida](#)
- [United States Institute of Peace](#)

reports

What Place for SSR in the Malian Peace Process?

A year after the peace agreement, Mali is still beset by violence from radical groups, showing that a more sustainable security governance is a prerequisite for enduring peace. After Mali's first steps towards security sector reform (SSR) in 2013, DCAF assisted the government in the creation of a national SSR architecture. Today, the Ministry of Security is identifying areas for sectoral reform while civil society and international actors lead complementary initiatives. Since 2014, DCAF has worked with the Malian SSR coordination bodies, the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection, and with democratic oversight actors such as the National Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations and Parliament to support SSR in Mali.

Despite agreement on the need for SSR, the main coordination body is yet to be operational, leaving individual initiatives without a coherent framework. The peace agreement has brought new urgency to reform, as it calls for an inclusive national SSR council; a decentralized police service under regional authority; and local consultative security committees. After a recent Council of Ministers decree, these structures should be operational shortly and allow Malian stakeholders to define an inclusive, national vision for security that channels existing initiatives into a holistic process.

Malian political leaders should integrate an SSR vision in the implementation of the peace agreement while international partners should push to keep SSR on the forefront and commit resources to the process. Both Mali and its partners need to avoid the false

dichotomy between the urgent need to increase operational capacity and the long-term imperative of good governance. Beyond training and equipment, building an effective and accountable security sector in Mali will require a shift in the way the sector is governed. The moment to start is now, because peace will not endure in absence of good security governance.

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links

- [DCAF](#)
- [Government's Action Program for 2013-2018](#)

reports

Bridging the Gap Between Local Authorities and Citizens



Rural municipalities are resorting to traditional authorities to levy so-called development taxes in villages.
swisspeace / Lukas Krienbuehl

Decisions on local development policy need to be embedded at local level. What sounds obvious in theory is proving to be a major challenge in reality for local governance. Indeed, the involvement of local authorities and non-governmental organizations as citizens' representatives often proves to be insufficient.

Mali is a case in point: the decentralization process led to a shift in administrative competencies from central government to municipalities and other Malian regional bodies. In spite of the efforts made, the population's influence on local policy has remained limited, particularly in rural areas. Elected representatives often lack access to the people they are meant to represent because of the sheer size of many municipalities or the disputed legitimacy of some politicians. For a number of years and despite the standstill following the military coup and the rebellion in the north of the country, the Malian legislator has recognized village, community and fraction leaders as intermediaries between municipalities and citizens. The integration of religious and traditional authorities or even business actors in local governance processes also raises major challenges in terms of participation, accountability, transparency or efficiency.

These issues have been analyzed as part of a learning project launched by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), facilitated by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and swisspeace. This project led to the development of a framework for analyzing informal local governance institutions. Case studies on Mali, Macedonia, Tanzania and Mongolia revealed that, without the involvement of informal institutions, the implementation of sustainable and peaceful policies could prove more difficult. In Mali, as in many other places, hybrid systems may be a more constructive form of governance at local level.

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- [DDLGN learning project](#)
- [Case study on Mali](#)

reports

The Role of Religious and

Traditional Authorities

Since the crisis of 2012/2013, the situation in Mali has served as further proof that weak relations between the state and society are one of the fundamental causes of state fragility, both limiting the effectiveness of development programs and increasing the risk of violent sociopolitical conflicts erupting. Based on this experience, promoting constructive state/society relations in politically fragile regions has become another key focal area of development work.

The same applies to the activities of FriEnt's member organizations in Mali, which is why, in March 2015, FriEnt held a roundtable discussion on Mali to kick-start a long-term process of reflection on the options for implementation in this context. Six representatives from local Malian partner organizations were among the guests invited to this initial event, which focused on the question of what links between which institutions and actors – from both the state and society – could help bring about tangible progress in firmly embedding state institutions in society. The Malian participants turned the discussion toward the importance of religious and traditional authorities. According to them, relations between these long-established structures and more modern national and decentralized state institutions are very weak. Their general opinion was that positive changes that would give traditional authorities and religious institutions a voice and opportunities for participation in dealings with government bodies could significantly improve the prospects of a successful reconciliation process.

In June 2016, as a follow-up to the roundtable debate, FriEnt invited participants to come and share their experiences and assessments of the role played by religious actors in implementing the peace agreement in Mali. At this discussion forum, it was generally agreed that the actions of religious groups will have a significant yet highly ambivalent influence on the peace process. However, the question of what chances there are to provide external impetus to strengthen the constructive potential of these actors without weakening the legitimacy of the state remains a contentious issue.

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links

- [“Reconciliation in Mali – who, with whom, and how?”](#), article from FriEnt Impulse 01-02.2016 (in German)
- [FriEnt](#)

reports

Development of a Joint

Cooperation Strategy for Mali

The Mali crisis of 2012/2013 demonstrated that the security and political issues affecting the Sahel-Sahara region go beyond the borders of this landlocked country. Consequently, Switzerland decided to address the political, security, humanitarian and development challenges from a regional and complementary perspective. This led, three years ago, to the development of “Strategic axes for Switzerland’s commitment in the Sahel” for 2014 to 2018, establishing a framework for any Swiss intervention in this region. All of the departments and offices engaged in the Sahel region contributed to the shaping, and then the drafting of this document.

The unprecedented mobilization of the international community around the peace process in Mali, and now in the implementation of the agreement for peace and reconciliation signed a year ago, reflects the concern and the importance attached by international actors to the Sahel region and in particular to Mali. It is in this context that Switzerland started to develop a joint cooperation strategy for Mali (2017-2020), which is based on the coordinated implementation of three Swiss foreign policy instruments, namely South Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), as well as the Human Security Division. It will be implemented in accordance with the principles of an approach that is both flexible (rapid adaptation of programs to the changing context) and conflict-sensitive (proximity with populations, political dialogue, commitments with a wide spectrum of actors).

With this new strategy, Switzerland remains committed to establishing lasting peace and reducing poverty in Mali. The strategy will take into account the root causes that led to the dual crisis (rebellion and coup d’état) that has struck Mali, including bad governance and increasing inequality. Subject to subsequent approval, this new strategy is expected to be built around the following three areas: 1) rural development and food security, 2) basic education and professional training, and 3) governance and peace. By so doing, Switzerland will contribute actively to the implementation of the Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali.

An annual budget of CHF 25 million (of which CHF 20 million will come from the South Cooperation) will be allocated to the implementation of this strategy.

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- Strategic axes for Switzerland's commitment in the Sahel 2014-2018 (in French)
 - The FDFA's commitment in Mali
-

in depth

What are the Main Obstacles to Peace in Mali?

Since it attained independence in 1960, Mali has witnessed several rebellions and periods of instability. Yet, in spite of the complex relations between its various communities, the country was able to use its history to find the necessary motive to maintain its unity within the framework of a certain cultural diversity to guarantee its integrity. However, the crisis of 2012 has brought to the fore the state's fragility and the serious societal and structural problems facing the Malian society. Today, one thing is clear: it is no longer enough to reduce the crisis to separatist inclinations or schemes pitting the North against the South. To find responses to the Malian crisis, the Malian Institute of Action Research for Peace (IMRAP), in partnership with Interpeace, travelled across Mali and to refugee camps in order for Malians to develop their self-portrait on the obstacles to peace. Presented in this report, the cross-cutting analysis of the issues emerging from the dialogue between Malians highlights four key factors which are considered obstacles to peace. It is intended as an overview of the major challenges and to serve as a basis for a quest for concrete solutions and actions for peace in Mali.

links

- [IMRAP, Interpeace. Self-Portrait of Mali on the Obstacles to Peace. March 2015](#)
-

in depth

What is the Role Played by Local Actors?

October 2015 saw a noticeable and unexpected détente in the conflict in Mali, which paved the way for a series of local negotiations and talks in Anéfis. Even in the capital city, Bamako, the pessimism of the past few months is giving way to cautious optimism. This “bottom-up” reconciliation could stimulate the implementation of the peace accord signed in June, which is stalled since summer 2015. This report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) highlights the possibilities offered by local approaches to conflict resolution like the

one adopted in Anefis, where key local, business, and military actors whose authority does not necessarily come from traditional roots have been involved in the negotiations. However, ICG still regards the situation in Mali as extremely fragile, as demonstrated by the attacks carried out on November 20, 2015 at the Radisson Hotel by groups excluded from the peace process. The authors' analysis is followed by an assessment of the peace process and a proposal of four fundamental measures for preventing a relapse into weak governance and violence and revitalizing the peace and reconciliation agreement.

links

- [International Crisis Group. Mali: Peace from Below? December 2015 \(Overview in English\)](#)
- [International Crisis Group. Mali: Peace from Below? December 2015 \(Publication in French\)](#)

in depth

Gender Relations and the Prospects for Peace in Mali

At the roots of the armed conflict in Mali are marginalization, social inequality and cleavages that are built in to the Malian society. This also includes gender roles and gender relations, which have often been omitted from conflict analyses, or merely included as per obligation. Broadening the understanding of gender as comprising women, men, girls and boys, and integrating gender roles and relations as a natural part of a conflict analysis, has proven a rare exercise. The present study, commissioned by Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense, aims at contributing to a deeper understanding of the armed conflict in Mali. The purpose is to provide guidance to policy considerations regarding international support to Mali, and the surrounding region, by exploring the local conflict dynamics and more specifically by illuminating how gender relations and the status of men and women can impact conflict dynamics and the prospects for sustainable peace.

links

- [Helene Lackenbauer, Magdalena Tham Lindell, Gabriella Ingerstad. Swedish Defence Research Agency. If our men won't fight, we will – A gendered Analysis of the Armed Conflict in Northern Mali. November 2015](#)

news

swisspeace / KOFF

KOFF Annual Meeting

Over 30 representatives from member organizations took part in the KOFF annual meeting on May 12, 2016. After an eventful 2015, the aim was to take stock of the situation and assess the challenges as well as the opportunities that KOFF now faces.

The meeting's statutory part provided an opportunity to discuss KOFF's positioning. Many organizations renewed their call for stronger political commitment on KOFF's part and for peacebuilding to have a greater presence in Swiss public debate. KOFF then presented its draft Advisory Board, which is to replace the Steering Committee from September 2016 and is aimed, amongst other things, at improving member organizations' representativeness and their access to decision-making.

In the thematic section of the meeting, the Human Security Division (HSD) presented its regional and thematic priorities regarding peace and human rights policy, with the aim of strengthening the ties and synergies between the HSD and NGOs. The HSD took this opportunity to restate its commitment to KOFF and its desire to maintain a regular dialogue with NGOs towards developing innovative approaches.

The KOFF team would like to thank its member organizations for their participation, their support, and their drive throughout this meeting.

KOFF

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links

- [Annual Report 2015: KOFF in Transition](#)

swisspeace Annual Report 2015: “Improving Conflict Prevention and Transformation”

The swisspeace Annual Report looks back at the various activities in which the foundation has been involved over the past year. The 2015 edition highlights key topics such as the role of civil society in peacebuilding and the conflict in Syria, presenting the relevant research and support initiatives in a concise and engaging way. The report also covers local and regional projects, as well as individual mandates and the swisspeace Annual Conference, where Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, outlined ideas for restructuring the UN. Readers are also informed of the changes that have arisen following the adoption of swisspeace's new strategy for 2016-2020.

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[links](#)

- [swisspeace Annual Report 2015](#)

Business, Conflict & Human Rights Course

What is needed for businesses to operate responsibly in volatile areas? The swisspeace course on Business, Conflict & Human Rights explores this question from various angles. It discusses state of the art international standards on business and human rights and ways for companies to implement them. Through a focus on active participation and common experiences, it sheds light on the roles and strategies of companies, governments, international organizations, and civil society in promoting responsible business practices.

Participants will be familiarized with relevant regulations, standards and initiatives at national and international levels; learn about best practices and improve their ability to practically implement and promote responsible business conduct; and develop a tailor-made action plan for one of their current projects to guide future implementation and better understand the perspectives of representatives from other stakeholder groups.

The course will take place from 10-12 November, 2016 in Basel. It can be taken as one module of the Master of Advanced Studies in Civilian Peacebuilding program offered by swisspeace and the University of Basel.

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- [Registration](#)

news

KOFF Member Organizations



Women's rights and conflict expert Justine Mbabazi (Switzerland, 2016). PeaceWomen Across the Globe

Rwanda – A Country of Women

From May 23 to 27, PeaceWomen Across the Globe organized a week of events under the heading “Rwanda – A Country of Women.” Justine Mbabazi, an expert in women’s rights and conflict, went to various cities in Switzerland to talk about how Rwanda is trying to put the shadow of genocide behind it and about the crucial role played by women in this process.

The varied program kicked off with a KOFF roundtable on “Transitional Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Lessons Learned from a Gender Expert,” in which Justine Mbabazi engaged with the participants and discussed how, in the wake of the tragedy, Rwandan women banded together and decided to take the fate of their country into their own hands. “After the genocide, it was clear to everyone that politics run by men had failed. So there wasn’t any significant resistance when the women demanded equal rights and fair political participation,” she said. Aside from her appearance at the KOFF roundtable, Justine Mbabazi also spoke at two secondary schools, the Universities of Bern and Basel, the Rote Fabrik cultural center in Zurich, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Cinématte movie theater in Bern.

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Overcoming Fragility and Reducing Human Suffering

Fragility is one of the main obstacles to sustainable development. With this in mind, Switzerland will be devoting significantly more of its budget under the framework credit for international cooperation 2017-2020 to work in fragile states. At international level, too, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is committed to finding ways to overcome fragility. On April 5, 2016, Federal Councilor Didier Burkhalter attended the Fifth Global Meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) in Stockholm, where the participants agreed to continue with the “New Deal” for Engagement in Fragile States. They also adopted the Stockholm Declaration, which underlines the fundamental role played by statebuilding and peacebuilding in enabling sustainable development.

In its capacity as co-chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee’s International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), Switzerland is also playing an instrumental part in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in fragile contexts through the New Deal. Moreover, the humanitarian challenges faced in fragile states are now being explicitly factored in: the need to tackle and overcome fragility in a sustainable way in complex humanitarian situations was addressed at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul during a high-level leaders’ roundtable under the heading “Changing People’s Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need.”

DEZA

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Program Officer Conflict and Human Rights

links

- [SDC’s work in fragile contexts](#)
- [International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding](#)
- [The Stockholm Declaration](#)
- [INCAF](#)
- [World Humanitarian Summit](#)

news

International Partner Organizations

Tenth Edition of the Global Peace Index

The Institute of Economics and Peace has recently published the tenth edition of its Global Peace Index, which ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness. This edition shows that the level of peacefulness worldwide continues to deteriorate, while the gap between the most peaceful countries and those most prone to violence continues to widen. Furthermore, according to the research, the impact of terrorism has risen sharply, with victims of terrorism increasing by 80% last year and only 69 countries having had no terrorist incidents in 2015. Amongst the countries with the lowest ranking were Syria, South Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia.

links

- [View the interactive map](#)
- [View the report](#)

Columbia puts its war records online

Victims' accounts, tribunal judgments, personal journals, photographs: these are some of over 160,000 documents relating to the violence that has ravaged Columbia for more than 50 years, which have recently been put online and made available through open access by the National Centre for Historical Memory. With an emphasis on information from civil society and victims' organizations, this data bank provides an accurate, detailed and harsh depiction of violence in Columbia.

links

- [National Centre for Historical Memory](#)
- [Online archive \(in Spanish\)](#)

World Humanitarian Summit

At the World Humanitarian Summit, which took place in Istanbul on 23-24 May 2016, some twenty organizations (including International Alert, Saferworld, and Conciliation Resources) called upon the international community to work together beyond the silos that currently exist between the peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, and development fields to address complex humanitarian situations. In a joint document entitled “The Peace Promise”, they highlight five fundamental commitments and commit themselves to promoting the synergies and complementarities required to reduce human suffering.

[links](#)

- [The Peace Promise](#)

calendar

Upcoming Events

July 5, 2016

Lausanne, Switzerland

[Podium discussion on working in conflict contexts](#)

Is it possible to contribute to the development of a country where there is no state? How can we work on a long-term basis in a country affected by conflict? What difficulties do development organizations face? A podium discussion organized in partnership with the Geneva Federation for Cooperation will look at these issues on July 5 in Lausanne. With the participation of Sidonia Gabriel, KOFF director.

[Further information](#)

[Registration](#)

July 16, 2016

Caux, Switzerland

[Caux Open House Day](#)

To celebrate its 70th anniversary, the Caux Palace opens its doors for a full day during the conference season. Take advantage of this opportunity to get a real insight into international conferences and learn more about the Conference Center.

[Further information](#)

[Registration by July 10](#)

September 9-11, 2016

Zurich, Switzerland

[Build Peace 2016](#)

How can technology, art, and research be used to build peace? This is the question that will be asked at the “Build Peace 2016” conference, which takes place in Zurich on September 9-11.

[Further information](#)

[Registration](#)

September 17, 2016

Berne, Switzerland

[Information session from PBI and PWS](#)

Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Peace Watch Switzerland (PWS) are organizing an information session in Berne enabling participants to learn more about opportunities to support human rights in their projects abroad and in Switzerland. This provides a chance to find out more about the work done by volunteers on the ground, the training process and the workings of the organizations. Another information session will take place on October 1 in Zurich.

[Further information](#)

[Contact](#)

September 21, 2016

Geneva, Switzerland

[Geneva Peace Talks](#)

Even in the most hostile and challenging environments there are many peace initiatives taking place that don't receive the attention they deserve. This year's Geneva Peace Talks “Peace Happens” will look to bring these initiatives and the people behind them to light. This public event, which takes place as part of the International Day of Peace, is organized by the United Nations Office in Geneva, Interpeace, and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform.

[Further information](#)

September 23-24, 2016

Basel, Switzerland

[swisspeace's CAS introductory module](#)

The introductory module of swisspeace's CAS in civilian peacebuilding Essentials 2016/2017 will take place from September 23-24, 2016. Designed for practitioners with an academic background, this CAS consisting of 21 days spread over one year provides a holistic understanding of civilian peacebuilding, reflects critically on peacebuilding practices and draws on current insights from research.

[Further information](#)

October 14-15, 2016

Basel, Switzerland

[CAS thematic block: Peacebuilding & Statebuilding](#)

The thematic block “Peacebuilding & Statebuilding” will take place on October 14-15, as part of swisspeace’s CAS in civilian peacebuilding Essential 2016/2017.

[Further information](#)

Until November 30, 2016

Basel, Switzerland

[Register for the swisspeace training on Theories of Change in Fragile Contexts](#)

Despite the widespread emergence of theories of change in strategy and project documents, they are rarely used to their full potential. The swisspeace training on “Theories of Change in Fragile Contexts” focuses on how ‘good’ theories of change can be created that will help practitioners gain an in-depth understanding of their programs and their impacts. The training will take place from February 1-3, 2017.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until November 30, 2016](#)

Until November 30, 2016

Basel, Switzerland

[Register for the swisspeace course on National Dialogue & Peace Mediation](#)

The “National Dialogue & Peace Mediation” course offered by swisspeace and the Berghof Foundation provides insights in how to understand, design and support national dialogue processes, training in dialogue and mediation skills and reflection on lessons that can be drawn from previous cases. The course will take place from February 13-17, 2017.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until November 30, 2016](#)

December 2-3, 2016

Basel, Switzerland

[CAS thematic block: Business & Peace](#)

The thematic block “Business & Peace” will take place on December 2-3, as part of swisspeace’s CAS in civilian peacebuilding Essentials 2016/2017.

[Further information](#)

January 27-28, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

[CAS Thematic Block: Dealing with the Past](#)

The thematic block “Dealing with the Past” will take place on January 27-28, 2017, as part of swisspeace’s CAS in civilian peacebuilding Essentials 2016/2017.

[Further information](#)

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KOFF

Kompetenzzentrum Friedensförderung
Centre pour la promotion de la paix
Centre for Peacebuilding

KOFF is a dialogue and exchange network facilitated by swisspeace. It is jointly supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the following Swiss NGOs which are members of the platform:

Alliance Sud	IAMANEH Schweiz	Solidar Switzerland
APRED	ICP	SOS Children's Villages
artasfoundation	Interpeace	Stiftung für Integrale
Baha'i	Lucerne Initiative for Peace and Security (LIPS)	Friedensförderung
Brücke · Le pont	medico international schweiz	Swiss Academy for Development
Caritas Switzerland	MIR Switzerland	Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund
Caux – Initiatives of Change Foundation	mission 21	Swiss Peace Council
cfd	miva – transporte l'aide	Swiss Red Cross
DCAF	Peace Brigades International	Swiss Refugee Council
Eirene Suisse	Schweiz	SWISSAID
Fondation Hirondelle	Peace Watch Switzerland	Terre des Femmes Switzerland
Geneva Call	PeaceWomen Across the Globe	terre des hommes schweiz
Grains of Peace	Pestalozzi Children's Foundation	Verein Palmyrah
Green Cross Switzerland	Quaker United Nations Office	Women for Peace Switzerland
Group for a Switzerland without an Army	Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund	World Vision Switzerland
HEKS	Society for Threatened Peoples	
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	Switzerland	