

# à propos

The KOFF  
Peacebuilding  
Magazine



## Colombia - Challenges ahead

swiss  
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Schweizerische Friedensstiftung  
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Swiss Peace Foundation

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## editorial

Colombia's armed conflict has lasted for more than half a century. The latest negotiations alone took more than four years. Following the rejection by referendum of the first deal in October 2016, the Colombian government and guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) finally reached agreement on a revised deal, which was ratified on December 1, 2017. This agreement aims to bring an end to a conflict in which more than 220,000 people have been killed and which has caused the internal displacement of nearly six million, as well as 60,000 disappearances.

However, there are still many challenges in enforcing the agreement. Particular care needs to be taken over the processes for dealing with the past, but also over resolving social conflicts, the inclusion of civil society, women and young people in the peace process, and the compatibility between economic interests and the defense of human rights. Only time will tell whether this agreement, which many people claim is innovative, is truly capable of bringing lasting peace to Colombia.

Marie Seidel, editor

# Colombia: an agreement that can lead to peace?



Street art in Bogotá, Colombia. Creative Commons/ Juan Cristobal Zulueta

After four years of negotiations between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government in Havana, the peace deal entered into force on December 1, 2016. The conflict parties were forced to renegotiate after the people of Colombia rejected the first version of the agreement in a referendum. After multiple failed peace negotiations in the past, this is a historic moment for Colombia and the expectations are high.

The ambitious agreement includes various measures to implement the points negotiated in Havana. The rights of the victims, the illegal cultivation of drugs, the agricultural development policy, the political participation of the FARC, and resolving the armed conflict, which includes a permanent ceasefire, are the important topics. Some of the initial challenges to be faced in the context of Colombia will be examined below.

Measures to compensate the victims of the conflict had already been taken before the negotiations were concluded. Since 2012, over six million victims have received reparation measures and around 194,900 hectares of land have been restituted in accordance with the Victims and Land Restitution Law. However, the government also implements an investment policy that has put these marginalized sections of the population at a disadvantage due to large agro-industrial projects and intensive raw-material extraction. This further reinforces the inequality between the rich and poor in Colombia, which is



already one of the highest in the world.

Furthermore, the peace process is polarizing the Colombian public opinion. Unlike in the 1990s, armed conflict with the FARC has not been part of everyday reality for people living in the cities over the past years – but it has been for some rural communities. There is no longer significant public support for the FARC's motives after thousands of committed abductions and the financing of their activities by drug trafficking. However, support from the wider community is needed to successfully integrate the former fighters into political and civil life. Far-reaching efforts to provide information by authorities, schools, civil and international actors about the advantages of the peace process will therefore continue to be necessary and – in light of the results of the vote – perhaps even more so.

Even with a smooth integration of the FARC into civil life, caution is advised in regards to the expectations of an improved security situation. In addition to the remaining smaller guerrilla movement, the National Liberation Army (ELN) with which peace negotiations are scheduled to start on February 6, numerous armed groups are active across the whole country, resulting mainly from the demobilization of paramilitary organizations. These are working in the lucrative coca production and are largely responsible for the high crime rate. Estimations suggest that the FARC only had around 7,000 fighters remaining. Last but not least, it had already declared a one-sided ceasefire months before concluding the negotiations in Havana.

The first weeks and months of the demobilization process, which is already underway, will show how many of the FARC combatants will demobilize for good and start a civil life and how many will join another armed group. The paramilitary demobilization process in the 2000s revealed that the appeal of the latter is significant if fairly unattractive integration measures are offered. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) gave a warning about the danger for the peace process in December 2016 as the zones intended for demilitarizing the FARC did not yet have the necessary infrastructure such as clean drinking water, sanitation, and health care. These circumstances increase the fear that the fighters will not disarm.

Earlier processes have also shown that the demobilized fighters will be in danger of being threatened or killed. The Patriotic Union was founded as the political arm of the guerrillas after the government and the FARC had concluded a ceasefire agreement in 1984. After initial successes in municipal elections, the following years saw around 3,000 party members murdered predominantly by paramilitary fighters, partly in coordination with state actors. This memory is still very present for today's FARC members. In fact, the Office of the OHCHR and NGOs have criticized the fact that the violence toward human rights defenders and social leaders, including from civil society organizations related to the FARC, dramatically increased in the second half of 2016. This can be traced back to the fact that the other armed groups are gaining new areas of influence because of the FARC's withdrawal. Although the Colombian state has an elaborate system of protective measures for persons who have to fear for their lives due to their past or present political activities, its effectiveness is very limited. The state's historical absence in rural areas, complicated bureaucratic operations between the authorities, and corruption make it almost impossible to implement preventative protective measures in an effective and timely manner.

Against this backdrop, it is difficult to predict whether or not the ambitious plans to

demilitarize and reintegrate the FARC will be successful. Nevertheless, the FARC is said to have been attuning its combatants to this process for quite a while now. The authorities, which can fall back on experiences from earlier processes, already began their preparations many months before the signing of the agreement. The peace agreement in Colombia is just one step in a long and difficult process. The next few years will show whether this implementation can actually contribute to the transformation of the causes of conflict.

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[links](#)

- [swisspeace – Dealing with the Past](#)
- [swisspeace's work in Colombia](#)

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reports

# Archives: Foundation for dealing with the past in Colombia



Preserving and dealing with archives of past human rights violations is a central component of a peace process. Archivo Historico de la Policia Nacional de Guatemala (AHPN Guatemala)

swisspeace supports the Office of the Attorney General of Colombia in preparing the investigation files necessary for future dealing with the past processes. The 2016 peace deal includes a truth commission and a special court to process the human rights violations committed during armed conflict, prevent future atrocities, and recognize the rights of the victims. The new institutions will complement the governmental and non-governmental initiatives that are already in place to deal with the past on the national and local level.

The files of the Office of the Attorney General contain information about the crimes committed during the war, which are essential for various activities carried out to deal with the past. These do not just include information on offenders and victims in different regions, but also provide indications regarding the motivation, methods, responsibilities of, and structures within the various actors involved in the conflict, including governmental authorities. Preserving and dealing carefully with these files is therefore a central component of the peace process.

In 2016, swisspeace visited different archives of the Office of the Attorney General of Colombia and provided recommendations for assessing and processing the relevant files. The implementation of this strategy is currently being tested in a pilot project. The biggest challenge lies in the enormous amount of case files generated during the conflict. The fact that these are stored in over a hundred different locations makes things more complicated. Another difficulty lies in qualifying the crimes that will finally be relevant for dealing with the past. In case of doubt, they are qualified as “being connected to the conflict” in order to avoid wrongly excluding any cases.

The provision of the archives by the Office of the Attorney General is a long-term task and must be carefully planned and implemented from the very beginning.

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#### [links](#)

- [swisspeace - Dealing with the Past](#)
- [swisspeace's work in Colombia](#)

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reports

# Counting on local capacities in the next

# phase of building peace



Cinep works with communities to support their efforts to mediate local and regional conflicts. Cinep

For over fifty years Colombia has suffered an armed conflict that has subsumed a vast range of social conflicts. This context forced people in rural areas to look for mechanisms to resolve issues that were neither addressed by the State nor by those armed groups who controlled certain areas of the country. Many communities became highly organized, be it in the form of communal councils (Juntas de Acción Comunal), grassroots organizations, or wide networks and platforms. These organizations have developed their own forms of mediation as immediate response to conflicts in their geographical areas. Given the legitimacy those 'mediators' have gained over time, they remain key actors in the dawning post-agreement phase. The signature and implementation of the peace deal between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) can become a precious opportunity to shed light on those social conflicts marginalized by the war and to address those that may emerge in the post-agreement context.

For the Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Cinep), this new context is an opportunity to establish new forms to relate and interact with state institutions. It also brings a social responsibility to accompany the implementation of the peace deal in the communities by means of monitoring, the denunciation of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, the support to land restitution processes, the backing of grassroots organizations in their peacebuilding efforts and, in particular, the development of alternative mechanisms of conflict resolution (dialogue, mediation) as new form to engage for actors who are used to violent relationships.



Cinep is working with communities to support their efforts to mediate local but also regional conflicts. These activities include the strengthening of existing capacities, strategizing for concrete interventions as well as the linking with other actors.

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## links

- Cinep

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reports

# Promoting a strong role for civil society in the Colombian peace process



A message of peace in the Pichilín community in the department of Sucre, where Sembrandopaz is working. Caritas Switzerland

When the peace deal entered into force on December 1, 2016, four years of negotiations between President Santos and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) came to an end and a new era began in Colombia. Both parties signed an amended version of the agreement on November 24, 2016, after the people of Colombia rejected the first version in a referendum at the start of October. The signing of the agreement resolved one of the world's longest and most violent conflicts lasting more than five decades and resulting in over 200,000 deaths, thousands of disappearances, and around seven million displaced persons.

It is now time to start implementing the agreement. This does not just require the commitment of the conflicting parties, but also the active participation of civil society. This is why ten Swiss relief organizations and NGOs (ask!, Caritas Switzerland, COMUNDO, Fastenopfer, HEKS, Peace Brigades International, Peace Watch Switzerland, Swissaid, terre des hommes schweiz, Terre des Hommes Suisse), the Human Security Division of the FDFA, and the Swiss representation in Colombia have been supporting the organizations Sembrandopaz and Colemad with the peacebuilding program Semillas de Esperanza since 2014.

These two organizations work in the Caribbean region strongly affected by the conflict. Colemad works to protect human rights, particularly land rights, women's rights, and gender equality, focusing on network and political lobby work and the organizational development of grassroots groups. Sembrandopaz supports development in the region by establishing community structures and sustainable agriculture, strengthening civil society organizations, and creating dialog forums to promote the peace process at local and regional level. For both organizations, peace is more than just ending the armed conflict. Achieving it requires holistic solutions, everybody's participation, and persistence.

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### [links](#)

- [The peacebuilding program Semillas de Esperanza \(in French or German\)](#)
- [Colemad \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Sembrandopaz \(in Spanish\)](#)

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reports

# Art to fight against violence in Colombian



Street procession of Videos y Rollos in the Bosa district in Bogotá. Videos y Rollos

Many peace initiatives in Colombia work on artistic and creative approaches to combat violence in the cities. Good examples are the youth organizations Asociación juvenil Videos y Rollos in the Bosa district in Bogotá and Barrios del Mundo in the Chapinero district. They offer young people courses in music, drama, video-making and photography that are not just about art, but also about giving the young people new development prospects. This is because, as well as learning a range of techniques, the focus is always on discussing certain issues. The young people learn to share ideas and opinions as well as to accept different points of view.

Art provides the young people with the opportunity to express their opinions, feelings, and hardships in relation to social and everyday issues in a variety of different ways. The process is always aimed at encouraging them to be critical and expressive. It is important to give young people a variety of ways to express themselves, as those who cannot express themselves will also not be understood. Those who are not understood will not be listened to. And those who are never listened to will not be included, which in turn leads to aggression and violence.

Furthermore, art projects like these encourage the young people to play an active role in contributing to their district. A culture festival in the area is the annual highlight. Through the joint activities, the young people not only experience mutual acceptance, but also a certain respect, which is also accompanied by increased self-confidence and stronger social ties.



terre des hommes schweiz supports projects that prevent violence with young people in areas such as Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, and Cauca.

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[links](#)

- [The terre des hommes schweiz projects in Colombia](#)
- [Plato Hedro art platform \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Asociación juvenil Videos y Rollos \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Colectivo Barrios del Mundo \(in Spanish\)](#)

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reports

# A dangerous situation for human rights defenders in Colombia



Commemorations for the victims of the armed conflict in Bogotá, 2016. Peace Brigades International

Even with the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the situation for human rights defenders (HRDs) in



Colombia continues to cause alarm. According to the Somos Defensores organization, an HRD was attacked every other day and one murdered every five days between January and June 2016. Due to structural impunity, the majority of these crimes went without prosecution.

Land and environmental activists are especially at risk. Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Peace Watch Switzerland (PWS) are using their international presence, monitoring, and support to protect the HRDs. Here are their reports on two situations.

Between November 17 and 21, 2016, four community leaders were killed in Colombia and a further three survived attempts on their lives. One of the survivors is activist Argemiro Lara, leader and member of several organizations campaigning for land rights and the restitution of land for farmers in the northern Sucre Department. He sustained no injuries during the attack thanks to his bodyguard. Lara's involvement has caused him to fall victim to intimidation and threats on multiple occasions and although he has always reported these incidents, there have been no consequences for the perpetrators. PBI is monitoring this case.

Human rights defender, Alvaro García, has been imprisoned since April 2016 without being sentenced under law. Alvaro is one of the most important activists involved in the land case of the Bella Unión and El Guayabo communities, which run the serious risk of being evicted from their land. The false and unfounded allegations against Alvaro are part of a broad strategy to criminalize community leaders. Three other leaders had to go into hiding for more than six months before all charges against them were dropped. This situation was also used to intimidate the other people living there, undermining the community's legal efforts, and deliberately exploiting the leaders' absence to create precedents and illegally take possession of new land. PWS is monitoring this case.

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#### [links](#)

- [Organization Somos Defensores \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Report on the murder of the four community leaders \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Information about Argemiro Lara on the PBI Colombia blog \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Peace Watch Switzerland](#)
- [Peace Brigades International Switzerland \(in German or French\)](#)

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reports

# Business, human rights,

# and the peace process in Colombia



ask! works with Colombian partner organizations to support trade unions, communities, and social organizations. Swiss-Colombian working group

In terms of business and human rights, Colombia has gained a progressive image over the last few years; but this has little to do with reality. More than ten years ago, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights were adopted, and the Guías Colombia for non-extractive industries came a little later. In 2014, Colombia established a public policy on Business and Human Rights and, in December 2015, presented its national action plan (NAP) for business and human rights as one of the first emerging countries. Although the country received a lot of praise, there was a volley of criticism from human rights organizations. They found fault with the superficial consultation process, the non-participation of the affected communities, the voluntary nature of the measures, and the strong orientation toward the needs of businesses.

The peace process does not mean that conflict no longer exists. The investment protection and free trade agreements and the opportunities for multinational companies to take legal action associated with them further limit the Colombian government's room for maneuver in terms of promoting peace and social justice considerably. Dealing with large businesses therefore still presents major challenges: human rights violations due to economic interests are still the order of the day, and a rigorous and transparent human rights due diligence assessment is rarely implemented. Social reforms have been neglected in the peace process, except when it comes to land, and the impunity of crimes that serve the interests of businesses also remains unresolved.

The Swiss-Colombian working group ask! is committed to ensuring that Swiss companies in

Colombia respect human rights and protect the environment. It promotes mandatory standards, due diligence obligations for human rights, and transparent reporting. Working with Colombian partner organizations, it guides and supports trade unions, communities, and social organizations whose rights have been affected by the activities of Swiss businesses.

[Swiss-Colombian working group \(ask!\)](#)

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links

- [Swiss-Colombian working group \(ask!\) - business and human rights \(in German\)](#)
- [The Colombian government's website on business and human rights \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Website of the Fundación Ideas para la Paz](#)
- [NGO Indepaz, business and human rights \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [NGO Tierra Digna, business and human rights \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Partner organization PAS \(in Spanish\)](#)

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reports

# Switzerland's new cooperation strategy in Colombia

Switzerland's cooperation strategy in Colombia for the 2017-2020 period is based on the concept of complementary commitments pursued by a number of administrative entities. These are the Human Security Division (HSD), the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Action is planned in three different areas: protection of affected population, peacebuilding and human rights, and inclusive and sustainable economic development. The first two of these areas of intervention, where a joint action is being taken by the HSD and the SDC are described below. The contributions being made, spread over four years, are CHF 7 million and CHF 35 million respectively.

The first area of intervention will focus on more remote areas where the absence of the rule of law is felt most keenly. It will involve setting up and supporting systems for protecting the most vulnerable populations (humanitarian mine clearance, protection of local human rights activists, schemes to combat gender-related violence, etc.) and strengthening local institutions.

The second area of intervention will focus on establishing the right conditions for lasting conflict transformation. Switzerland's aid aims to promote access to better living conditions, to apply the Victims and Land Restitution Law, to support transitional justice

systems and lastly to promote peaceful and democratic governance.

With this strategy, Switzerland intends to enhance the coherence of its action by fostering synergies between the entities. This is essential given the complexity of a conflict that has lasted for nearly half a century and has affected all parts of Colombian society. Within this context, Switzerland is renewing its commitment to one of its closest partners on the continent.

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[links](#)

- [Human Security Division of the FDFA](#)
- [Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development – projects in Colombia](#)
- [State Secretariat for Economic Affairs – projects in Colombia](#)

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in depth

# To what extent is the Colombian peace deal innovative?

In November 2016, the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) signed a revised peace deal after four years of intense negotiations. A new report by NOREF indicates the degree to which innovative concepts and methods were used in these peace negotiations that were not just decisive for the final ratification of the agreement, but could also set a precedent for peace negotiations elsewhere.

It states, for example, that the rights of the victims were the focus of the negotiations, a Gender Subcommission was created, and an implementation plan was prepared long before the agreement was signed. The fact that there was international support, but the negotiations were always under the control of the local actors, and that the civil society played a fundamental role in the peace process are also confirmation of the novelty of the Colombian peace process, allowing it to enjoy the status of a pioneering example.

[links](#)

- [NOREF. Innovations in the Colombian peace process. June 2016](#)
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in depth

# Virtual archive of peace deals

An exciting, new database about peace agreements was recently made available online. “Language of Peace” is a virtual archive that provides access to and allows for comparison of thousands of peace agreement provisions. As well as the usual search criteria such as region, language, or period of time, specific aspects of peacebuilding can be searched for (such as ceasefire agreement or human rights), making the website very user-friendly.

The value added by the website is particularly clear when it comes to Colombia. It has made the innovative Havana peace deal accessible in a simple form, which could be useful for future negotiations. At the same time, it will be possible to precisely analyze the older, failed Colombian peace process agreements with a view to avoiding their shortcomings in future.

The project was created by a research team at the University of Cambridge and the UN Mediation Support Unit and has the particular aim of inspiring conflict parties and peace mediators. Take a look for yourself!

links

- [Language of Peace – Virtual archive of peace agreements](#)

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in depth

# Gender and peacebuilding in Colombia

The roles played by women and men in a country characterized by conflict and violence like Colombia need to be analyzed more closely. Back in 2014, a study by International Alert pointed to the fact that gender should not just be a “technical” aspect of peacebuilding, but rather a perspective from which social norms, identities, and power structures must be investigated. There has always been sexual violence or forced prostitution in connection with conflict, especially in Colombia.

The report examines three local civil society organizations that, in their own way, approach peacebuilding in a gender-relational way. It provides a profound, gender-specific analysis of important areas of peacebuilding in Colombia based on the results of research carried

out in the country.

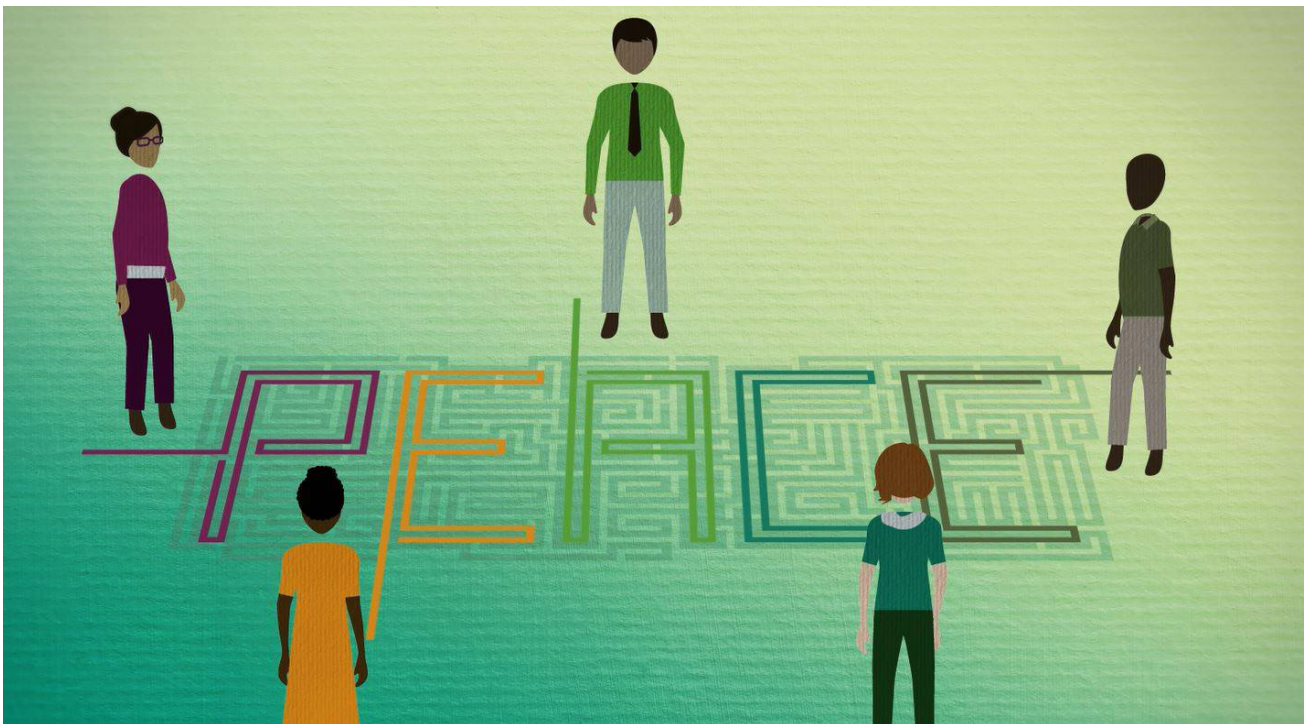
## links

- [International Alert. Re-examining identities and power. Gender in peacebuilding in Colombia. October 2014.](#)

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## news

# swisspeace / KOFF



## An introduction to swisspeace

swisspeace published a new presentation video in December. The aim is to visualize the activities of the Swiss peace foundation in a short and succinct way and illustrate why peace work is of global significance. swisspeace's visions, goals, and approaches are also explained. Share this video and help swisspeace raise awareness of peacebuilding work!

Three videos have also been launched about swisspeace's key topic areas. The first one shows why taking the initiative to deal with the atrocities of our past is an absolutely central and necessary step in achieving sustainable peace. The video about statehood highlights the major challenges associated with fragile states and explain why it is crucial to understand how states and societies operate in conflict-affected countries. The topic of mediation is the focus in the third video, showing how important it is for peace negotiations to be more effective and inclusive in order to build peace in a lasting way. Other presentation videos are yet to follow over the course of the next few months.

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#### links

- [swisspeace | Preventing violent conflict – promoting peace](#)
- [swisspeace | Dealing with the Past](#)
- [swisspeace | Statehood](#)
- [swisspeace | Mediation](#)

## Is religion a cause of conflict or peace? The new CAS in Religion and Conflict

The phenomenon of the “rediscovery” of religious issues can be observed across the world. Religion is emerging more and more as a factor of conflict, be it on a domestic or international level, in Switzerland or in other countries. The swisspeace CAS in Religion and Conflict therefore puts emphasis on the relationship between state and religion, the conflict dimensions of religion, the potential of religion to resolve conflicts and build peace, as well as methods and tools to tackle conflicts with religious dimensions.

Gain a deeper understanding of the so-called world religions, analyze case studies on current conflicts with religious dimensions, and learn more about Switzerland as a multi-faith country.

The CAS certificate program starts in April and finishes in October 2017. It consists of 17 course days and can be completed in one or two years. The course blocks will be held in German from Thursday to Saturday at the University of Basel. It is aimed at professionals and academics who are interested in religion as a factor in conflict and would like to combine the latest research findings with practical experience. The deadline for applications is February 28, 2017.

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#### links

- [Further information \(in German\)](#)
- [Registration](#)

## swisspeace course on preventing violent conflicts

Despite increased international pressure and action to prevent violent conflicts and mass atrocities after the shocks of Rwanda and Srebrenica in the 1990s, the number of armed conflicts has increased in recent years. Whilst the wars in Syria, South Sudan or Ukraine differ with respect to the actors, driving factors and dynamics, they all raise the question of whether and how violence and its escalation could have been prevented. The renewed attention to conflict prevention thus comes as no surprise, especially in light of a cost-benefit-perspective: investing in prevention is more sensible than post-conflict reconstruction.

The swisspeace course on preventing violent conflicts provides insights into the concept of conflict prevention and its shortcomings and explores how it relates to issues such as the prevention of violent extremism and mass atrocities. Based on lessons learnt and best practices, it examines practical tools and methods for applying conflict prevention in your work context.

This course is designed for professionals working in peacebuilding and development including policy-makers, practitioners and academics. Registration closes on February 28, 2017.

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#### [links](#)

- [Further information](#)
- [Registration](#)

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#### news

# KOFF member organizations

## Fondation Hironnelle: the leadership changes, but the convictions remain the same

Jean-Marie Etter, CEO of Fondation Hironnelle and one of its three co-founders with Philippe Dahinden and François Gross, retired at the end of 2016. Caroline Vuillemin, previously Chief Operating Officer, took over from him as CEO on January 1, 2017, with Xavier de Bruyn becoming Editorial and Operating Officer and Philippe Bovey taking up the



post of Secretary General supervising all support, administrative, financial, logistical and security services. This new management team is supported by Nicolas Boissez, previously a program manager, who now moves into the new post of Communications and External Relations Officer.

Since 1995 Fondation Hironnelle has been creating or supporting independent news media in crisis zones and countries in transition. Millions of people all over the world now place their trust in the news it provides, to help them deal with the most important problems of their daily lives.

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- [Fondation Hironnelle website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)

## PeaceNexus Foundation launches 2017 call for Organizational Development support

The Switzerland-based PeaceNexus Foundation has been supporting organizational development of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and international NGOs with a peacebuilding mandate since 2009.

Again this year, PeaceNexus Foundation is launching its call for Organizational Development support. The application should describe what your organizational challenges are and how the support would help overcome these challenges and achieve more impact. CSOs from specific countries of the Western Balkans, Central Asia and West Africa can apply, as well as international NGOs. The deadline for application is February 12, 2017.

A comprehensive description of what PeaceNexus' organizational development support entails, including examples of what other organizations have achieved through its support, can be found in English and French on our website.

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#### [links](#)

- [PeaceNexus' website](#)

# The United Nations adopts a declaration on "the right to peace"

The declaration adopted by the General Assembly on December 19, 2016 is the latest in a long series of declarations reiterating the importance of peace for the human person. After being entitled to a socio-political order allowing the realization of all his rights (Universal Declaration § 28), receiving a sacred right to peace (1977), the right to peace as a people (1984) and the right to a culture of peace (several resolutions in the 1990s), the individual now has the right to "enjoy peace".

The Charter of the United Nations, though it lacks the means to implement it, grants the right to peace of States. The reciprocal, a right to peace granted to individuals is thus legitimate. It would have been better if the declaration had been adopted by consensus. Since its founding, APRED has been working to make peace a human right and will humbly continue to do so.

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## [links](#)

- [The Declaration on the Right to Peace \(A/RES/71/189\)](#)
- [APRED on the right to peace](#)

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news

# International



Participants in the Sunday evening panel of the Basel Peace Forum. Gabriel Hill

## Basel Peace Forum launched to rethink peace

Despite many international efforts, setbacks have called earlier successes of peacebuilding into question. The Basel Peace Forum aimed to address this problem and to rethink peace. The first edition took place on January 15 and 16 in Basel. About 120 decision-makers from business, diplomacy, academia and civil society met to reflect on previous endeavors and inspire new ideas for peace.

The program included two panel discussions with leading personalities including the Syrian architect and author of the book “The Battle for Home”, Marwa Al-Sabouni, the former Finnish Minister for International Development and current president of the European Institute of Peace, Pekka Haavisto, and the CEO of the IKEA Foundation, Per Heggnes. Three workshops then followed to explore linkages between peace on the one hand, and health, artificial intelligence and risk analysis on the other.

The discussions revealed that it is crucial to break the silos between the different sectors in order to establish new partnerships for peace. They also highlighted the key role that the business sector should ensure in peacebuilding as well as the challenges and opportunities of new technologies and artificial intelligence for peace. These three demands were formulated in a call to the world leaders.

The Basel Peace Forum was organized by the Swiss Peace Foundation. The Canton of Basel-Stadt, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and private donors supported the Forum financially. The conference will take place regularly and shall achieve global importance and reach over the next few years.

[swisspeace](https://www.swisspeace.org)

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links

- [Basel Peace Forum](#)
- [Media release of the 16.01.17: Basel Peace Forum calls for responsive and responsible leadership for peace](#)
- [Follow the Basel Peace Forum on Facebook](#)
- [Follow the Basel Peace Forum on Twitter](#)

## OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference

The OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference took place in Hamburg on 6 and 7 December, 2016. It was organized by the OSCE-wide NGO-network Civic Solidarity Platform, and rounded off a year's work on civil society's key role in fighting for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Given the violence and the rise in extremism in a large segment of the population, civil society plays a vital role in trying to overcome crises and conflict. However, the reality is grim in many OSCE countries where civil society's space for action is becoming increasingly restricted.

The 2016 OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference brought together more than 120 participants to try and find solutions to the main challenges posed by the current situation, the crises and violent conflicts, and worrying developments within the OSCE region. The conclusions and recommendations were compiled in two outcome documents, including the Hamburg Declaration on Protecting and Expanding Civil Society Space, which received particular attention from the German authorities chairing the OSCE in 2016.

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links

- [FriEnt article on the OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference](#)
- [Civic Solidarity Platform](#)
- [Hamburg Declaration on Protecting and Expanding Civil Society Space](#)

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calendar

# Upcoming events

February 6, 2017



Lausanne, Switzerland

### [Leaving violence behind. Comparative perspectives of North and South](#)

Whether individual or collective, violence affects us on a daily basis. Too often it is accepted, or even trivialized, but it has a major impact on our physical and emotional wellbeing. Humans are not innately violent, but we do have a tendency to reproduce violent behavior. Under these circumstances, how do we leave violence behind and rediscover the ability to live together, including in countries like Rwanda where the wounds of genocide are still raw? fedevaco is organizing a conference on the subject in Lausanne.

[Further information](#)

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February 13, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [What should be the values of Swiss society? A mission 21 conference](#)

Switzerland is finding it increasingly difficult to reach a consensus on the values it wishes to convey. While pluralism of values seems dangerous to some, others see it as an opportunity. As incidents become more common, a discussion on values is increasingly pressing. mission 21 is organizing a conference on the subject in Basel on February 13, where experts on values and religion will be present.

[Further information and registration](#)

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February 24-25, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the Peace Mediation training](#)

Learn about non-violent conflict transformation and improve your negotiation and mediation skills. In this 2-day course, mediators share their experience with supporting peace processes. The Peace Mediation training will take place on February 24-25, 2017, as part of swisspeace's CAS in Civilian Peacebuilding Essentials 2016/2017.

[Further information](#)

[Registration asap](#)

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February 27, 2017

Zurich, Switzerland

### [Governance, Law & Development - a discussion of the 2017 World Development Report](#)

The World Development Report (WDR), published each year by the World Bank, provides an in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of economic development. The 2017 edition on "Governance and the Law" seeks to shed light on how a better understanding of governance can bring about more effective policy interventions to achieve development. A panel discussion organized by the Center for Development and Cooperation (NADEL) of the ETH Zurich will focus on how the lessons of the WDR can be applied to development cooperation.

[Further information](#)

[Registration](#)

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Until February 28, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the Gender in Conflict & Peacebuilding training](#)

The Gender in Conflict & Peacebuilding training will take place on April 7-8, 2017, as part of swisspeace's CAS in Civilian Peacebuilding Essentials 2016/2017. It focuses on gender equality in peacebuilding and applies a gender perspective on conflicts.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until February 28, 2017](#)

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Until February 28, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the CAS in Religion and Conflict](#)

Is religion a cause of conflict or peace? In this new CAS on religion and conflict, participants will reflect on the relationship between state and religion, the conflict dimensions of religion, the potential of religion to resolve conflicts and build peace, as well as on methods and tools to tackle conflicts with religious dimensions. The CAS certificate program starts in April and finishes in October 2017 and consists of 17 course days (from Thursday to Saturday) which will be held in German.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until February 28, 2017](#)

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Until February 28, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the swisspeace course on Preventing Violent Conflicts](#)

The swisspeace course on Preventing Violent Conflicts explores and critically discusses the notion of conflict prevention, macro- and micro-level methods for conflict prevention and the potential of private sector risk assessment tools for the development and peacebuilding sectors. It will take place on May 3-5, 2017.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until February 28, 2017](#)

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March 13-17, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [swisspeace Fragility, Conflict & Statebuilding course](#)

Fragile states have become an issue of major concern for the international community. But what exactly is state fragility? The swisspeace course on Fragility, Conflict and Statebuilding focuses on the conceptual, policy and implementation challenges of statebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

[Further information](#)

[Registration asap](#)

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March 23, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [International cooperation in fragile contexts: the example of Afghanistan](#)

How can Switzerland help societies torn apart by war and violence become safer and more peaceful in future? This question will be the subject of a presentation of Switzerland's activities in Afghanistan by the SDC's cooperation bureau in Kabul. Since 2002 and the fall of the Taliban, the SDC has been conducting a reconstruction program there specifically addressing education, local governance and human rights.

[Further information](#)

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Until March 31, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the Human Rights & Conflict Transformation training](#)

Despite wide recognition that the fields of human rights, peacebuilding and development work in and on similar contexts, they are often perceived as distinct disciplines. Get insights on the value of linking human rights and conflict transformation and learn from practical lessons and tools from both fields for use in project design, implementation and evaluation processes. The training will take place on May 31-June 2, 2017.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until March 31, 2017](#)

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Until April 30, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the swisspeace Summer School on South Sudan](#)

How can peace and conflict studies contribute to understanding the conflict dynamics in South Sudan, and how can insights from South Sudan advance academic research? The 5-day summer school will focus on the main developments in South Sudan since independence in 2011 and the key actors and main drivers of conflict today. It explores how the ongoing armed conflict relates to previous civil wars and the lessons learned from peace and state building engagement taking place prior to independence. Specific topics relevant to the South Sudan context including state formation, local governance, peace mediation, civil society, and responsibility to protect will be centre stage. The Summer school will take place on July 3-7, 2017

[Further information](#)

[Registration until April 30, 2017](#)

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February 2017 - December 2019

Lebanon and Jordan

### [IAHV's peacebuilding program in Lebanon and Jordan](#)

The International Association for Human Values (IAHV) is launching a longer term, in-depth peacebuilding program in Lebanon and Jordan with the aim to contribute to the prevention of violence and future extremism among affected children and foster a self-sustaining

peace by strengthening the psycho-social foundation of targeted vulnerable populations. The aim of the program is to reduce trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety for 18000 children and 3000 families, heal and empower 400 youths as agents of change in their communities who will continue the healing work, and improve the well-being of social workers.

[Further information](#)

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**Publisher** KOFF of swisspeace  
**Contact** Sonnenbergstrasse 17, P.O. Box, CH-3001 Bern, Tel.: +41 (0)31 330 12 12  
**Editing** Marie Seidel, Luca Gschwind  
**Translation** Furrer Übersetzungen, Übersetzergruppe Zürich  
**Cover** Children waving the Colombian flag in Cartagena, Colombia.  
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## KOFF

Die Schweizer Plattform für Friedensförderung  
La plateforme suisse de promotion de la paix  
The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

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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:

ae-Centre	HEKS	Society for Threatened Peoples
Alliance Sud	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	Switzerland
APRED	IAMANEH Schweiz	Solidar Switzerland
artasfoundation	Interpeace	SOS Children's Villages
Baha'i	Lucerne Initiative for Peace and	Stiftung für Integrale
Brücke · Le pont	Security (LIPS)	Friedensförderung
Caritas Switzerland	medico international schweiz	Swiss Academy for Development
Caux – Initiatives of Change	MIR Switzerland	Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund
Foundation	mission 21	Swiss Peace Council
cfd	miva – transporte l'aide	Swiss Red Cross
DCAF	Peace Brigades International	Swiss Refugee Council
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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	Schweizerischer Katholischer	
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