

# à propos

The KOFF  
Peacebuilding  
Magazine



## What future for the Horn of Africa?

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## editorial

Civil war, political instability, the presence of terrorist militias, drought, famine: the current situation for most countries in the Horn of Africa is a cause for concern. Because of the difficulties and despite the immense challenges, international commitment to the region has remained strong. Switzerland also has a presence on the ground: through its governmental institutions and NGOs, it is trying not only to deal with the most pressing issues but also to establish stability and lasting peace, either directly or by supporting local organizations.

Humanitarian aid, development aid, peacebuilding: although priorities change and evolve according to region and context, all these sectors are present and increasingly interdependent. Whatever Swiss organizations are doing on the ground, it therefore seems vital that they all adopt a conflict-sensitive approach and coordinate their efforts if hopes are to be nurtured of bringing stability, which is crucial to the interests of all countries. The region will hold the key to its own peaceful future as soon as it will start to view itself as a single entity. That is what we attempt to show in this edition.

[Marie Seidel](#), editor

*NB: in the majority of articles in this edition, the term Horn of Africa covers all the member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The FDFA uses a slightly different definition.*

focus

# The crisis-ridden Horn of Africa – a bottomless pit?



Despite high hopes after the independence, South Sudan is today in free fall. Martina Santschi / swisspeace

Recent reports from the Horn of Africa show little promise of positive changes – famine as a result of war and drought, armed clashes between governments and rebel groups, attacks from extreme militia, disastrous economic situations, states of emergency, and collisions between security forces and demonstrators. The list could go on, and the situation has more or less remained the same for several years.

Hardly a day goes by in which the Horn of Africa does not dominate the news headlines. The United Nations have declared a state of famine in some Somali and South Sudan regions, and violent clashes are happening time and time again in many Horn countries. While famine is often associated with extreme weather conditions, the Global Report on Food Crisis 2017 makes it clear that armed conflicts are the driving causes of nine out of ten of the worst humanitarian crises, thus underlining the close link between peace and food security. This is also the case in South Sudan.

Almost six years after independence, South Sudan is in economic and political free fall. Although July 2011 was full of hope, armed conflict broke out just over two years later. The

peace agreement of August 2015, which was negotiated under the auspices of the regional organization IGAD, has not yet been able to secure long-term peace. The renewed fighting in the capital city Juba in July 2016 clearly revealed the deep political crisis as well as the unwillingness to back up the peace agreement with action. Although the guns fell silent after these violence clashes in Juba, there are still fights in many places between the army and armed groups at a local level, with the civil population also hit hard in most cases.

In a speech on December 14, 2016, President Salva Kiir announced a new road map for peace, stability, and prosperity in the form of an all-encompassing National Dialogue. Although the government repeatedly emphasizes complementarity with the peace agreement signed, it is the failure to implement it and the ongoing armed clashes that rule out the idea of a National Dialogue in the eyes of most international actors. There is also the fear that the government is simply playing for time or wants to hide the non-implementation of the peace agreement and acquire new money from abroad.

Squeezed between the various fronts, civilians in many parts of South Sudan are fleeing in the hope of regaining a bit of dignity. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that South Sudan has 1.9 million internally displaced persons, with 1.59 million refugees in neighboring countries (as of April 2017). It is mostly impossible for internally displaced persons to continue cultivating their fields and provide for themselves. It is also often dangerous, or if people have to take refuge, completely impossible to get hold of external food aid. Low agricultural activity, large-scale crop failures, and insecure transport routes as a result of robbery and armed conflicts have also brought trading – which is so vital – to an almost complete standstill in some areas and led to an explosion in food prices.

The effects on other states in the region and their reactions tend to vary and are based on historical relations between states and their own national interests. The Horn countries are closely interwoven in terms of history, economics, politics, and culture. Even if the linguistic and ethnic diversity within and between the countries is considerable, the region is shaped by cross-border affiliations, trade, and political connections. States such as Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda have all supported rebels and opposition groups in the other countries for many years in pursuit of their own interests. Neighboring states have thus helped significantly exacerbate conflict in each other's countries and have benefited from the instability created. In the long term, however, the price to pay is a heavy one, as is becoming apparent in South Sudan: flows of refugees – some 800,000 South Sudanese refugees are sheltering in Uganda alone – and the adverse economic effects are having a serious impact on neighboring states. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that regional stability – to help countries take care of their own economic interests – and prevention of armed conflicts on their own territory have become key concerns. Over the past few months, a rapprochement between South Sudan and Sudan, as well as between the two old enemies Uganda and Sudan, has been observable for the first time in quite a while. This encouraging news, for a change, is perhaps a hopeful sign that the region is starting to see itself as a symbiotic whole and realize it holds the key to a peaceful future in its own hands.

Nonetheless, there are still many hurdles to overcome within South Sudan. Although all sides keep agreeing to ceasefires at varying intervals, there is no end to the violent clashes and the suffering of the civilian population. Foreign oil production and development aid personnel are also being attacked repeatedly or taken hostage. The lack of cohesion within

the various armed groups and the apparent gulf between the different political and military leaders severely hinder the search for a peaceful agreement. A ceasefire, in addition to any regional and international support, is of particular importance to ensure self-sufficiency and social rehabilitation for entire generations in South Sudan over the longer term.

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#### [links](#)

- [swisspeace's work in the Horn of Africa](#)
- [Global Report on Food Crisis 2017](#)
- [International Office of Migration - South Sudan Humanitarian Update #75](#)
- [International Crisis Group. South Sudan: Rearranging the Chess Board. Africa Report N°243. December 20, 2016](#)
- [The Nordic Africa Institute. Why South Sudan Conflict is Proving Intractable. Policy Note 4, 2015](#)
- [Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium. Livelihoods and Conflicts in South Sudan. Briefing paper, October 20, 2016](#)

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#### reports

# The Churches' Action Plan for Peace in South Sudan



Many people have not given up their hope of peace in South Sudan. Mission 21

South Sudan has descended into chaos and is suffering from a famine at the moment, but neither the government nor the opposition are expected to bring peace to the country. The public institutions are weak and people are asking themselves how the young country is to escape this vicious circle.

The churches in South Sudan have not yet given up their hope of peace and, unified in the South Sudan Council of Churches, have started a nationwide peace initiative – the “Action Plan for Peace.” The Council of Churches is currently the only institution left in South Sudan that enjoys the trust of the whole population. It sets an example of cooperation beyond ethnic boundaries and ensures neutral peace mediation and reconciliation work. It achieves this through its nationwide network of ecclesiastical structures, employees, and Christian communities.

The aim of the action plan is to promote a holistic peace process by mobilizing the public and supporting political peace processes on a national and international level. A further objective is to set up neutral forums for meetings and dialog between representatives of different sides of the conflict, launch a large-scale reconciliation campaign among the population with trauma work and conflict mediation, and strengthen local organizations that participate in the peace process.

This plan is backed by Mission 21 as well as other international institutions and ecclesiastical organizations and it is regarded as the last chance for peace in South Sudan. In June, the World Council of Churches in Nairobi is inviting representatives from all over East Africa to a conference in order to find ways for the religious communities in the Horn of Africa to successfully step up the efforts for peace and justice and overcome the famine. The South Sudanese churches’ peace initiative could be a promising example.

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links

- [More information on the Action Plan for Peace in South Sudan \(in German\)](#)

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reports

# Addressing hunger with more than food - An integrated strategy for South Sudan



A South Sudanese mother and child harvesting greens / Caritas Internationalis

Recent warnings of a looming famine and catastrophic food insecurity have put the Horn of Africa into renewed focus of the international community. In South Sudan, UN organizations have already declared famine in several counties. They stressed that the continuous rise in food insecurity was largely ‘man made’, a consequence of the ongoing civil war in the country.

This context forms the basis of Switzerland’s Cooperation Strategy for South Sudan 2017-2020. The new strategy endorses the principle that assistance needs to be conducted in a conflict-sensitive manner and must fully take into account South Sudan’s political economy. It also recognizes that there is a need to not only mitigate the symptoms of South



Sudan's recurrent crises – immediate humanitarian needs resulting from food insecurity and displacement, but also to address their underlying causes.

The strategy thus proposes a holistic approach by accepting the political nature of humanitarian work. It combines instruments covering the spectrum from emergency response (where needed) to early recovery (where possible), as well as peacebuilding. Concretely, this means Switzerland supports organizations in providing lifesaving food for the most vulnerable, and in enabling farmers to become self-sufficient. Switzerland also invests in spaces for dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives, for example through collaboration with the South Sudan Council of Churches.

In practice, the integrated strategy builds upon a close collaboration within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, which translates into joint analysis of the context and joint programming on the ground. Furthermore, it enhances Switzerland's advocacy and policy influencing role, for example through convening donors, practitioners and academics, and establishing fora for thinking beyond insular humanitarian, development or peacekeeping mandates.

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[links](#)

- [Swiss Cooperation Office and Consular Agency, Embassy of Switzerland in South Sudan](#)

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reports

# Launch of the South Sudan Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility



A cattle camp across the river Nile in Bor, South Sudan. Martina Santschi / swisspeace

South Sudan has a long history of international engagement in humanitarian aid, development, peacebuilding and statebuilding. Following the outbreak of renewed conflict in December 2013, a number of donor countries (Switzerland, Canada and the UK) decided that it was important not to continue with a “business as usual” approach. They resolved that their operations in South Sudan should be conducted in a conflict sensitive manner and, where feasible, contribute towards sustainable peace. A consortium of three expert organizations (Saferworld – consortium lead agency; CDA Collaborative Learning Projects; swisspeace) was contracted to set up and manage a “Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility” (CSRF) to be based in Juba.

The Facility delivers on a range of services such as 1) the development of common guidelines and principles on conflict sensitive engagements in South Sudan; 2) ongoing research and analysis to advise donors and their implementing partners on conflict sensitivity issues and best practice; 3) capacity development and training; and 4) promoting a culture of ongoing learning and critical self-reflection on conflict sensitivity.

As part of its services to international donors and implementing partners in South Sudan, the CSRF has launched a Research Repository which is hosted by the South Sudan Peace Portal. The aim is to provide policy makers, program managers and implementers with greater contextual knowledge by offering a searchable repository of research, analysis, and other resources, as well as the option for signing up for receiving periodic updates on new research and analysis.

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links

- [Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility](#)
- [Research Repository](#)
- [South Sudan Peace Portal](#)

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reports

# Caritas Switzerland is committed to providing sustainable solutions amid the drought crisis



With little rainfall this year too, the worst drought in decades is on the cards in Ethiopia, too. Caritas Switzerland

Since 2015, East Africa has been affected by a major drought in connection with the weather phenomenon El Niño as a major cause. With little rainfall this year too, the worst drought in decades is on the cards. Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan are among the most severely threatened countries in East Africa, with up to 20 million people affected. However, droughts do not have to lead to famine. The scale of the impact is directly related to the capacities of the governments concerned and how much leeway international organizations are given. The extent of any hunger also varies accordingly and is much more

serious in the fragile contexts of Somalia and South Sudan than in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Caritas Switzerland has been working in these countries for many years. In collaboration with local partners, it works in the areas of water and food security, climate protection, and disaster risk reduction, and also provides emergency relief.

In Ethiopia and Kenya, it focuses emergency relief on food security and action in the field of water, basic sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). The approach here is based on linking relief, rehabilitation, and development, as sustainable aid is possible in these countries. In South Sudan and Somalia, the crisis is also being exacerbated by armed conflict. This is why Caritas only provides emergency aid there. South Sudanese refugees and the local population in the border region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are supported with food aid for example. The project also offers protective and preventative measures in relation to sexual violence.

In these contexts, integrating conflict sensitivity in all aspects of the project cycle is of utmost importance. Actions in the area of humanitarian aid have the potential to both incite and alleviate conflict. Caritas therefore uses the “Do No Harm” principle as a basis for the projects. This includes analyzing conflict potential before the start of the project and taking appropriate preventative measures such as including various societal groups to an equal extent in order to avoid conflicts within the target populations.

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- [Caritas in the Horn of Africa \(in German\)](#)

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reports

# The Somali Election: challenges ahead



An interview with Dr. Dominik Balthasar, Senior Researcher at swisspeace' Statehood program.

*swisspeace: The Somali presidential election was to be held in August 2016. Why was it postponed to February 2017?*

Originally, the election promised to be a one-person, one-vote national poll. But, largely due to prevailing security concerns, it shifted to an electoral system. It was, thus, preceded by an indirect election process, which saw 135 'traditional authorities' selecting delegates who elected the members of parliament in autumn 2017. On February 8, they, in turn, elected former Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmajo' as President of Somalia.

*This graded process was also hoped to hamstring the extensive corruption that had haunted the 2012 presidential election. Did it work?*

Unfortunately not. In fact, in light of an estimated USD 20 million having feverishly changed hands during the course of the electoral cycle, several analysts, investigators, and some Western diplomats have started referring to the 2017 presidential election as the most fraudulent political event in Somalia's history.

*Who is Somalia's new president Farmajo?*

Farmajo first became a well-known figure in Somalia in November 2010 when appointed as a Prime Minister by then President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. During this time, he implemented many popular policies that brought him trust and respect, both nationally and internationally. He reduced the then cabinet from 31 members to a core of just 18, fought corruption, and ensured government salaries were paid on time – which proved particularly important for a security apparatus that has faced stiff military resistance and economic incentives by the militant Islamist organization Al-Shabaab.

## *What can be expected of Farmajo's presidency?*

While much hope and optimism has accompanied the election of Farmajo, he faces a challenging agenda. Apart from establishing security, a productive economy, and national unity, Farmajo will have to get a derailed political process of federalization and democratization back on track, in addition to improving Somalia's relations to its neighbors. Yet, in light of limited resources and an ongoing, conflictive state-building project at hand, it remains to be seen whether Farmajo will be able to deliver on the high, popular expectations.

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- [swisspeace Statehood program](#)
- [Watch another interview with Dominik Balthasar on the challenges of peacebuilding in Somalia \(2016\)](#)

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### reports

# Europe impedes legal access for Eritrean refugees

Since its hard-won independence from Ethiopia in 1991, Eritrea has been governed by former freedom fighter Isaias Afewerki. The country's future looked very promising at the start. However, since the border war with Ethiopia (1998–2000), a state of emergency has prevailed. Afewerki's regime is using this to legitimize a year-long period of compulsory national service. Promised elections were never held and the constitution has still not been implemented. Independent media and civil society organizations have been banned. Opposition activists have been imprisoned or left the country.

In 2016, 5,000 Eritreans left their country every month. Over 150'000 Eritrean refugees are registered in Ethiopia and about 100'000 in Sudan. Switzerland is one of the most important destination countries for Eritrean asylum seekers in Europe.

In light of the relatively high number of applications and the very high protection quota, there has been some dispute in Europe since 2014 regarding the actual situation in Eritrea. Politicians in particular keep trying to paint the situation facing the civilian population in Eritrea as not that bad, which would make it possible to send Eritrean refugees back. The

enforcement of removal orders to Eritrea from Europe is not possible at this time. In Switzerland, the State Secretariat for Migration tightened things up in 2016. Under this new approach, persons who could not give any reason for seeking asylum other than illegal migration were no longer recognized as refugees. The EU has taken various measures to stem migration beyond Europe's borders, with its plans, for example, to support Sudan, Eritrea, and Libya with their border security.

Given the dramas people face on their journey to Europe, the European countries should focus on legal migration options and resettlement sites instead of isolation. For as long as the situation in Eritrea fails to improve, the Swiss Refugee Council sees no justification for tightening asylum policy.

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#### links

- [Swiss Refugee Council](#)
- [More information about the Eritrean refugees](#)

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reports

# The role and importance of cultural initiatives in peacebuilding in Sudan



In Sudan, art and cultural initiatives are fostering a spirit of openness. “Swiss Initiative - culture projects”

Between 1983 and 2005, Sudan was beset by civil war, and it has been subject to sanctions by the USA and the EU for 20 years. Around 18 million children and young people suffer from poverty and isolation from the global community. They often have no other choice than to migrate or find an outlet in extremism.

Working on the assumption that art and culture foster a spirit of openness, which in turn provides fertile ground for peace, the “Swiss Initiative – culture projects” (SI) association developed a long-term cultural and educational collaboration with Sudan in 2013. This was also achieved under the patronage of UNESCO and with the help of both the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Goethe-Institut. With an action plan covering four areas, a film and theater festival was launched among other things, which got the film industry back on its feet and allowed young people to participate in workshops and connect with the international community of creative artists.

As a result, Sudan was able in 2016 to provide a film team for the United Nations Development Programme’s campaign, “Partnering Against Violent Extremism”. The result was “Iman”, an intervention film from Sudan, made by Sudanese people. The film touches the hearts of young Sudanese people, who, due to a lack of prospects, are susceptible to the recruitment tricks of extremists. The film celebrated its premiere with great success at the “International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights” in March in Geneva. In late June, it will be presented at the European Conference on African Studies in Basel, followed by a series of discussions.



The SI will also launch the Karmakol Festival – an international cultural festival to promote peace in the Sudanese village of Karmakol – in December 2017. This marks the first time in its history that UNESCO has funded a project in Sudan. The “Nile Project” – a cultural movement to promote peace in the 11 Nile countries – was also created with the aim of implementing a successful formula in other countries and replacing the current North-South approach with a South-South approach to cooperation in the area of development.

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#### [links](#)

- [Swiss Initiative - culture projects](#)
- [Swiss Initiative - culture projects on Facebook](#)
- [Trailer of “Iman – when faith is at the crossroads”, an intervention film as part of the campaign “Partnering Against Violent Extremism”](#)
- [European Conference on African Studies \(ECAS\)](#)

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#### reports

# Swiss cooperation strategy for the Horn of Africa



Children playing in Kakuma, a refugee camp in Northern Kenya. SDC

The Horn of Africa (Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti) has been a core region of Switzerland's international cooperation since 2013. The originally humanitarian-oriented engagement has been developed and expanded over the past few years to include aspects of development cooperation and peacebuilding.

Under the joint guidance of the Humanitarian Aid and the South Cooperation at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the strategy is being implemented in partnership with the Human Security Division (AMS) and the Directorate of Political Affairs at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Justice and Police's State Secretariat for Migration.

The approach used combines the tools associated with humanitarian aid and development work and ensures they complement each other. This is essential given the complexity of the region, which is affected by ongoing conflicts and recurring crises, such as the ongoing drought, and ranks as one of the most fragile in the world. Innovation is needed in order to maintain the required level of agility in such a fragile situation. This will make it possible both to respond to emergencies in the short term and to meet structural needs in the medium and long term with a view to dealing with recurring challenges.

The geographical focus of the Swiss engagement is on Somalia and the (semi-)arid areas of North East Kenya and South East Ethiopia. In these regions, Switzerland is committed to good governance, improvements in health care with the focus on mothers and children, migration and protection of the civilian population as well as improvements in the food security sector. Under the current strategy (2013-2017), between CHF 30 and 40 million are spent and used every year. Building on the existing commitment to the various geographical areas and topics, the new strategy (2018-2021), which is still in development, will have a similar scope.

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[links](#)

- [The work of the SDC in the Horn of Africa](#)

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in depth

# State building and

# providing public services in South Sudan

From 2012 to late 2016, the Secure Livelihood and Research Consortium (SLRC) conducted research into South Sudan and six other countries to examine the relationship between state building and provision of public services, development of a state's capacity, and support to sustain the livelihood of the population. Through various publications, to which Martina Santschi from swisspeace also contributed, the research project in South Sudan reveals that there is no direct correlation between the provision of public services and the public perception of the state concerned. One of the findings of the research project was that the perception of state institutions is not negatively affected by international stakeholders playing a key role in providing public services. Access to services is far more important. It is precisely this indifference to the service provider that opens up opportunities for South Sudan. Nonetheless, the authors agree that any international support to strengthen the state and non-governmental stakeholders must emphasize – as part of any analysis or other activities – the local context, local structures and authorities, and the views and priorities of the population.

## links

- [Daniel Maxwell, Rachel Gordon, Leben Moro, Martina Santschi, and Philip Dau. Complexities of service provision and state building. October 2016](#)
- [More SLRC publications on South Sudan](#)

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## in depth

# Gender in Ethiopia in the face of the drought

In 2015, the weather phenomenon El Niño brought a serious drought to large parts of Africa, including Ethiopia. According to the Ethiopian government, 10 million people were dependent on food aid in 2016. There is every chance that such crises may lead to other social problems and have a negative effect on women and girls in particular. For this reason, Oxfam commissioned a study on gender and emergency situations affecting states. Results showed that while men, women, girls, and boys are all affected by drought, the impact tends to vary. The group most affected by malnutrition in Ethiopia includes pregnant women, breastfeeding women, children, and the elderly in particular. Children are not able to eat as much while women are more severely affected than men. This can be traced back to social structures, as even pregnant women are at a disadvantage to men when it comes to distributing food in the household. To counteract these disadvantages, the study recommends that humanitarian aid bears this inequality in mind and distributes gender-specific goods such as baby food or supplements specifically for pregnant women, the

elderly, or female households.

#### [links](#)

- [Consolidated Gender Analysis for the Ethiopian Drought Response](#)

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#### in depth

# Extractives in the Horn of Africa – a curse or a blessing?

The Swedish Life & Peace Institute dedicated its July/August 2016 edition to the question of the extractive industry in the Horn of Africa and what sociopolitical effects this major sector has on the region. Raw material extraction has already proven in Botswana that it can definitely contribute to stable economic growth. But this sector has only recently emerged in the Horn. Substantial gold, copper, and silver resources have been discovered in Eritrea, helping the country gain international recognition. Oil has been found in Kenya and Uganda, while Ethiopia is home to large gold mines and gas extraction is seen as a possibility. Oil extraction may even lead to a few positive results in structurally weak Somalia.

Apart from the usual problems governments face in this line of business, the Horn of Africa, however, also has a few important characteristics. The resources are almost exclusively located in peripheral areas and border regions in which the population are politically marginalized and structurally marooned from the major urban centers. The presence of raw materials has reignited the governments' interest in these regions and they have tightened control over these neglected areas once more. In all countries, these regions are among the poorest with the highest illiteracy rate. This tension between the enrichment of the state and the failure to fulfill the needs of the local population leads to new conflicts in the already fragile regions. The contributors to this bulletin believe that raw material wealth can be a blessing for the region if institutional framework conditions are created that allow the acquired wealth to be distributed. On the other hand, overly short-sighted exploitation of these resources could lead the regions to even more instability.

#### [links](#)

- [Life and Peace Institute. The political economy of extractives in the borderlands. Horn of Africa Bulletin. July-August 2016](#)

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#### news

# swisspeace / KOFF

Summer School, 3 – 7 July 2017

## South Sudan – Lessons for Peace & Conflict Studies?

This year's Summer School unpacks the dynamics of peace and conflict in the world's youngest state of South Sudan.



swiss  
peace

University  
of Basel

## Summer School: South Sudan – Lessons for Peace & Conflict Studies?

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? swisspeace's 5-day summer school provides an overview of current academic and policy debates on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and statebuilding and critically reflects on their relevance for the South Sudan context.

What are the main developments in South Sudan since independence in 2011? Who are the key actors and what are the main drivers of conflict today? How does the ongoing armed conflict relate to previous civil wars and what are lessons learned from peace and state building engagement taking place prior to independence? What role has the recent IGAD-led mediation process played? How can the root causes of the conflict be addressed and what is the role of external actors in this process?

Participants will focus on specific topics relevant to the South Sudan context including state formation, local governance, peace mediation, civil society, and responsibility to protect. They will work with case studies, conduct interviews with experts and reflect on scenarios for future developments in South Sudan. The swisspeace Summer School is one module of the Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Civilian Peacebuilding of the University of Basel and swisspeace.

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links

- [Further information](#)
- [Application](#)
- [Annual course schedule](#)
- [Master of Advanced Studies \(MAS\) in Civilian Peacebuilding](#)

## An eventful year for swisspeace and KOFF

swisspeace can look back on 2016 as an exciting year in which the new 2016-2020 strategy was implemented for the first time. The annual report focuses on discussing the key programs of mediation, statehood, and dealing with the past, while also covering its political and methodological areas. The guiding principle of this new strategy is the “light footprint”, which allows local organizations to bear most of the responsibility for the peacebuilding process, with swisspeace playing more of an advisory role. Using examples of cases in Colombia, Myanmar, and Tunisia, the annual report shows how this enables swisspeace to create space for discussion and consultation, without seeking the spotlight, and carry out effective and sustainable peace work.

The KOFF platform was mainly concerned with two burning questions in 2016: How can KOFF step up its political influence and how can it make better use of its international networks to carve out more space for peacebuilding and show greater innovation in this area? The 2016 annual report is devoted to answering these questions, particularly with the discussion concerning the arms trade in Switzerland, but also with regard to the importance and implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for civil society. Effective peacebuilding requires new ways of thinking beyond the silos, and the KOFF platform is the perfect tool for this as it brings together almost 50 organizations whose missions and strengths cover different areas. The projects presented in the annual report underline this idea.

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Communications

links


- [swisspeace annual report 2016 – our light-footprint approach to peacebuilding](#)

news

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Frauenrechte im Irak –  
Speaking Tour  
einer irakischen  
Feministin



Yanar Mohammed is the guest at this year's VOIX DES FEMMES series of events. TERRE DES FEMMES Switzerland

## VOIX DES FEMMES with Yanar Mohammed

Iraqi human rights activist Yanar Mohammed is the guest at this year's VOIX DES FEMMES series of events organized by TERRE DES FEMMES Switzerland. From June 8-13, 2017, the feminist will be speaking in various Swiss cities about her fight for women's rights in Iraq.

Fifteen years ago, Mohammed founded the first shelters to protect women affected by violence in her country. She has been awarded several international prizes for her work.

In order to achieve a fairer society, it is necessary to protect human rights activists from persecution and violence. Switzerland also has a responsibility under international conventions and must live up to this in order to protect human rights and their advocates.

With Yanar Mohammed, TERRES DES FEMMES Switzerland will be opening discussions about the work of human rights defenders, and particularly those who promote women's rights, at four public events in Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, and Zurich.

[TERRE DES FEMMES Switzerland](#)

Salome Lienert

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Project leader for VOIX DES FEMMES and lobbying

#### links

- [TERRE DES FEMMES Switzerland](#)
- [VOIX DES FEMMES](#)

## PeaceNexus: a new member of KOFF

Launched in 2009, PeaceNexus is a foundation that invests in building the capacities and effectiveness of peace relevant actors. It provides advisory and facilitation services to organizations committed to preventing conflict and building peace in order to support organizational development and strengthen partnerships. The organization seeks to identify 'peace-relevance' through ongoing context analysis.

Current partners include both local and international NGOS, governments and multilateral organizations as well as the private sector. Its current geographical focus is on the Western Balkans, West Africa, Central Asia and Myanmar. The organization is governed by a board and has 12 staff members. The funding comes from an endowment provided by the Swiss philanthropist Hansjörg Wyss.

PeaceNexus joined the KOFF platform at the beginning of the year. As a KOFF member, it hopes to learn from the practical experience of other members and identify opportunities for collaborative initiatives.

#### [PeaceNexus Foundation](#)

Dr. Catriona Gourlay

[catriona.gourlay@peacenexus.org](mailto:catriona.gourlay@peacenexus.org)

Executive Director

#### links

- [PeaceNexus Foundation](#)

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news

# International

## Civil society under threat

A group of German civil society organizations, NGOs and networks published a discussion paper about the growing restrictions that civil society organizations are currently facing all over the world. Starting with the analysis of the worldwide trend of repression against civil



society, the paper's signatories then sketch concrete recommendations for and expectations from the German Federal Government and ministries. Signatories include Oxfam Germany, Reporters without borders, medico international and Misereor. They will seek to start bilateral discussions with different government actors. You can download the discussion paper "Civil society threatened all over the world. For just development, environmental protection, democracy, human rights and peace" [here](#).

#### links

- [Civil society threatened all over the world. Discussion Paper. December 2016](#)

## CDA Collaborative Learning

CDA, in collaboration with the Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, has recently published a briefing paper "Borrowing a Wheel: Applying Existing Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategies to Emerging Programming Approaches to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism ." The publication applies existing lessons and insights from designing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding and development initiatives to the emerging field of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). It is relevant for practitioners and policy makers designing, implementing, and evaluating P/CVE initiatives as well as donors and funders – working on P/CVE initiatives globally and in the Horn of Africa.

#### links

- [Borrowing a Wheel: Applying Existing Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategies to Emerging Programming Approaches to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism](#)

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calendar

# Upcoming events

June 8-14, 2017

Switzerland

### [VOIX DES FEMMES 2017](#)

VOIX DES FEMMES, a series of events held by TERRE DES FEMMES Switzerland, will be taking place for the eighth time in 2017. This year, the organization invites Yanar Mohammed, an Iraqi activist coming from Bagdad to tell us about women defending human and women's rights in Iraq. She will be in Switzerland from June 8-14, 2017 and hold conferences in Zurich, Bern, Lausanne and Geneva.

[Further information](#)

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June 13, 2017

Berne, Switzerland

### [Transparency in commodities trading: Switzerland must act](#)

In Chad, oil trading is dominated by Swiss commodities company Glencore. SWISSAID, having conducted research into these activities in Chad, will present the results of this research at a debate in Berne on June 13, 2017. Swiss members of parliament will be invited to discuss the demands made by SWISSAID in the presence of representatives from Glencore. The issues raised will include how to make commodities trading more transparent and how to ensure the local population can also benefit from these activities.

[Further information](#)

[Registration](#)

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June 18, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Information event on the activities of artasfoundation](#)

This year, artasfoundation invites you to an information event on its activities. The event will provide an opportunity to find out about the different projects and to talk to the organization's members.

[Further information](#)

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June 19, 2017

Berne, Switzerland

### [2017 annual public meeting of the NGO Platform Human Rights](#)

When it comes to human rights, whether in Switzerland or abroad, Switzerland has big ambitions. However, when it comes to evaluation, it is not uncommon to find a lack of coherence in human rights activity. Participants in the annual public meeting of the NGO Platform Human Rights on June 19 will discuss the difficulties of achieving coherence in Switzerland's foreign affairs policy and the challenges of pursuing a foreign affairs policy in tune with human rights.

[Further information and inscription](#)

[Registration](#)

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June 23, 2017

Lausanne, Switzerland

### [Annual Swiss Development Cooperation conference 2017](#)

Vocational education can make a big difference in reducing poverty, helping people acquire the skills they need to be economically active and take part in society, giving them prospects and access to decent pay and improved incomes. The Annual Swiss Development Cooperation Conference 2017 will be dedicated to that topic.

[Further information](#)

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Until June 30, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [CAS Civilian Peacebuilding Essentials](#)

Civilian peacebuilding plays a crucial role in efforts to transform violent conflict, promote peace, rebuild war-torn societies and prevent the recurrence of violence. This postgraduate course provides a holistic understanding of civilian peacebuilding and reflects critically on peacebuilding practices. It analyses theories, concepts, debates, policies and practices in peacebuilding & statebuilding; gender in conflict & peacebuilding; peacebuilding methodologies; peace mediation; dealing with the past & transitional justice, and business, conflict & human rights. The CAS consists of 21 course days (on Fridays/Saturdays) and runs from September 2017 to August 2018.

[Further information and application](#)

[Registration until June 30, 2017](#)

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Until June 30, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the Dealing with the Past & Conflict Transformation Course](#)

Finding a way to deal with a violent past following events such as civil war, the end of an authoritarian regime or occupation, is often argued to be the basis for lasting peace, democracy and rule of law. In this swisspeace course, participants will learn about the design and implementation of effective and transformative dealing with the past processes, get to know 'local' approaches to dealing with the past as well as 'international' norms and frameworks, understand processes of memorialization and learn from victim-perpetrators relationships in contexts of transition.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until June 30, 2017](#)

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Until June 30, 2017

### [Register for the Build Peace fellows program](#)

Apply now for the Build Peace Fellows Program. This program is aimed at exceptional individuals who want to work at the intersection of peacebuilding, arts, research and technology. It builds local innovative potential for individuals and organisations embedded in peacebuilding processes. Over one year, Build Peace helps fellows take an innovative peacebuilding intervention from idea to pilot implementation.

[Further information](#)

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July 3-7, 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 five-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 \(asap\)](#)

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July 5-7, 2017

Caux, Switzerland

### [Tunisia: building a lasting peace](#)

With the theme “Tunisia: building a lasting peace”, the International Summer Academy and Forum 2017 offers its participants a great opportunity for networking and in-depth understanding of the current situation and future challenges in Tunisia.

[Further information](#)

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Until September 30, 2017

Basel, Switzerland

### [Register for the swisspeace course « Business, Conflict and Human Rights »](#)

What is needed for businesses to operate responsibly in volatile areas? The swisspeace course on business, conflict and 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. It sheds light on the roles and strategies of companies, governments, international organizations and civil society in promoting responsible business practices. the course is organized in cooperation with SAFESTAINABLE.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until September 30, 2017](#)

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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 platform 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	Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund
Alliance Sud	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	Society for Threatened Peoples Switzerland
APRED	IAMANEH Schweiz	Solidar Switzerland
artasfoundation	Interpeace	SOS Children's Villages
Baha'i	Lucerne Initiative for Peace and Security (LIPS)	Stiftung für Integrale 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 Schweiz	Swiss Refugee Council
Eirene Suisse	Peace Nexus Foundation	SWISSAID
Fondation Hironnelle	Peace Watch Switzerland	Terre des Femmes Switzerland
Grains of Peace	PeaceWomen Across the Globe	terre des hommes schweiz
Green Cross Switzerland	Pestalozzi Children's Foundation	Verein Palmyrah
Group for a Switzerland without an Army	Quaker United Nations Office	Women for Peace Switzerland