

à propos

The KOFF
Peacebuilding
Magazine



Migration and Peacebuilding

1

focus

[Forced migration calls for development and peace](#)

2

reports

[A multi-stakeholder fund to strengthen and support community-company dialogue](#)

[Providing education for refugee and migrant children to foster long-lasting peace](#)

[Colombian diaspora: truth, memory and reconciliation](#)

[Empowering Indonesian migrants](#)

[Conflict sensitivity and peace education in the context of flight and migration](#)

[Statelessness, expulsions and human rights violations on the island of Haiti](#)

[Preventing violence: Social reintegration of deported young migrants in El Salvador](#)

[Creating prospects: Caritas Switzerland in Colombia](#)

[Developments in Switzerland's foreign policy on migration](#)

3

in depth

[The migration-conflict nexus](#)

4

news

[KOFF member organizations](#)

[First Annual Conference of the Swiss Civil Society Platform on Migration and Development](#)

[swisspeace / KOFF](#)

5

calendar

[Upcoming events](#)

editorial

Migration leads to conflicts and conflicts lead to migration. Both causalities appear to be intuitively comprehensible and are integrated into day-to-day discourse. Nevertheless, the connection between these two phenomena is more complex than it initially seems and it runs the risk of being manipulated for political purposes.

This issue therefore outlines the interactions between migration and peacebuilding from various perspectives. All articles are from NGO member organizations. The authors present creative approaches that show how people torn between migration and conflict are supported, emphasizing how peacebuilding is a key tool for dealing with migration.

In the last article of the «Dossiers» section, we also provide a brief overview of developments in the state's foreign policy on migration.

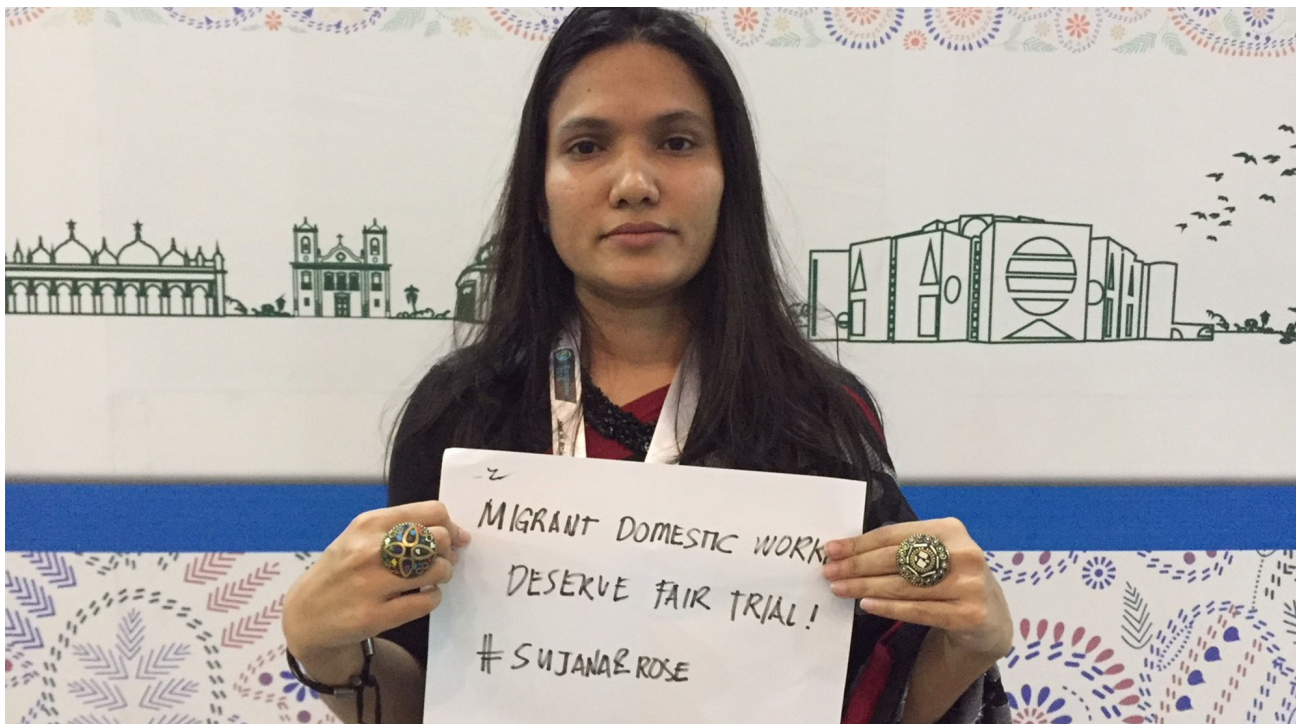
I would also like to take this opportunity to say goodbye to Sidonia Gabriel as the Project Director of KOFF and at the same time give a warm welcome to Anna Leissing as her successor. We would like to extend our thanks to Sidonia Gabriel for her work and wish her all the best for the future. We also wish Anna Leissing every success as she takes up her new position.

This is the first KOFF magazine that I am overseeing as the new editor. I am looking forward to working with the team and to many more exciting issues with a diverse range of articles.

[Amélie Lustenberger](#), editor

focus

Forced migration calls for development and peace



Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2016 in the entrance to the conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where alle participants wrote down a message. Picture: Caritas Switzerland

Flight and expulsion are usually the direct consequence of violent conflicts, political persecution, or the effects of climate change. With their long-term approaches, development cooperation and peacebuilding tackle the root causes of migration, such as poverty, exclusion, segregation, and exploitation, and help to create social-political and economic conditions that counteract forced migration. At the same time, they work toward making migration corridors safer and protecting the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons. The latter is of particular importance to Switzerland, which has enshrined peace and human rights in its constitution. It is a matter of establishing a supportive and coherent foreign policy – a migration, peace, and development policy – that protects particularly vulnerable people from the violent effects of conflicts and is designed to ensure that the vulnerability of migrants is not abused for political purposes. However, it is important to keep sight of the limitations of these tools: Neither peace nor development cooperation can prevent sudden migration triggered by an emergency situation. In this case, fueling false hope and exerting political pressure would be negligent and counterproductive.

This article is an attempt to link peacebuilding tools, as has been done in a similar way with those used in development cooperation, to the migration-specific challenges faced in conflict or post-conflict contexts – a largely new approach. Provided that its member organizations are interested, KOFF will set to work on a joint reflection process in the future.

The impetus provided by development cooperation

Migration processes are complex, especially in conflict or post-conflict contexts. Situations are changing all the time and there are very few state structures, if any, that are capable of or even willing to tackle these challenges. In addition to recognized refugees, whose status and protection are set out in multilateral rules and regulations, there is a rising number of asylum seekers and internally displaced persons whose legal situation is unclear, which makes them even more vulnerable.

Against this backdrop, development organizations, with their core mission of combating poverty and exclusion, are able to bring about improvements selectively and as the situation demands and provide long-term impetus to reduce individual causes of migration: For example, they get involved in providing infrastructure and (vocational) training, support people in sustainable farming and increase added value, promote the creation of jobs and humane working conditions, and fight abuses in labor migration resulting from poverty (including human trafficking). However, the development work cannot make any direct impact in terms of preventing migration.

The same applies to the involvement of members of the diaspora, whose role has been increasingly prominent on the international migration agenda for some time: They transfer vast amounts of money back home and have the potential to implement promising projects in their countries of origin. The diaspora is therefore a byword for the positive contribution migration can make and the importance of mobility, as set out in the «2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development».

The potential offered by peacebuilding

The significance of peacebuilding in terms of migration can be split into four stages: The first stage concerns flight as a result of fighting against certain political or ethnic groups and their members: Peacebuilding draws particularly on mediation processes and local ceasefire agreements and follows an inclusive approach wherever possible, aiming to involve all parties either directly or indirectly. This leads to agreements that take account of traditional governance structures, consider the needs of the various groups that make up the population, and thus give people the opportunity to stay after the violence has ended.

The second stage concerns the situation of the people fleeing: Mediation, in particular, gives peace-building privileged access to armed groups that provide crucial support for or even actively participate in human trafficking, as is the case in the Sahel. Although enlightening these groups about the rights of refugees is not normally at the focus of the peacebuilding, it could be an incentive for armed groups to pledge their respect for migrants' dignity and rights, especially as they want to be recognized and taken seriously at international level too. This approach is very delicate, but it would be worth reviewing. There have already been cases of this in humanitarian mediation.

The third stage concerns migrants returning home: During peace agreement negotiations, people in refugee camps and camps for internally displaced persons are asked about their concerns, which then must be included and guaranteed in the agreement. They are questioned, in particular, about the conditions that must be fulfilled before they would consider returning home after a violent conflict. This approach has been adopted in Mali, but it has not yet led to mass returns as the peace process has so far stagnated and very little trust in state institutions and non-governmental groups has been generated.

The fourth stage concerns transitional justice and dealing with the past: Conflicts, flight, and returning home are associated with traumatic experiences that not only affect individuals, but also entire population groups, state and private institutions, and their staff (police, military, etc.). Restoring peace involves dealing with the past, which includes the right to know the truth, experience justice, and receive any compensation required, as well as certain guarantees designed to create stability. These measures can build trust, paving the way for a return to the country of origin.

On the road to a «Global Compact on Migration»

In the (inter)national policy dialog, three key points are emerging: (1) State administrations and, in particular, political actors are seeking to control migration. (2) Civil society actors are focusing on defending human rights and establishing humane conditions for those being expelled or those already seeking refuge. (3) The UN Agenda 2030 has both the countries of origin and the destination countries in mind and aims to satisfy the various interests of the UN member states. The UN is striving to bring these wide-ranging interests together under a global framework supported by all states: By drawing up the two agreements for refugees (Global Compact on Refugees) and migration (Global Compact on Migration), it is keen to initiate a broad dialog that unites migration, mobility, and sustainable development, all underpinned by human rights.

On a global level, the Agenda 2030 points out the positive significance of migration and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in more than 10 subobjectives. However, their implementation in the fight against poverty and in conflict management is being met with reactive migration management at national level. At global level, this dissent needs to be dealt with and overcome within the framework of the agreements. Civil society actors are calling for an improvement in the protection of migrants in international regulations and for a continuation of the dialog at national level. For Switzerland, this means that the state and non-governmental actors involved need to come together quickly in a policy dialog surrounding the Global Compact on Migration in order to discuss the challenges and work out recommendations that are as practical as possible. Platforms like mdplatform.ch and KOFF can lend a hand in this respect.

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reports

Providing education for refugee and migrant children to foster long-

lasting peace



Teaching internally displaced people in camps in Myanmar/Burma. Picture: Pestalozzi Children's Foundation

The engagement of Pestalozzi Children's Foundation (PCF) in twelve countries emphasizes the interdependency between quality education and a more peaceful world. Children's education contributes to the realization of children's rights, intercultural awareness and competencies in order to erode culturally rooted prejudice and mistrust.

To realize its mission, since 2013, PCF supports in Myanmar in collaboration with a local partner organization internally displaced children in 14 camps out of 167. Following fighting between the Myanmar national army and the Kachin Independence Army, people fled for their safety and found shelter in camps. By providing protective learning opportunities in safe and equipped learning spaces, PCF and its local partner ensure access to education to more than 2000 displaced children in these camps. Taught by trained teachers, in addition to skills in literacy and numeracy, those children are provided with knowledge to understand the root causes of violence and armed conflict. In multi-cultural societies, intercultural understanding and tolerance constitute the key and are a prerequisite to reach a peaceful living together.

With the aim to reduce migration and to cope with its psychological consequences, PCF in collaboration with a local partner organization, UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council also supports more than 200 returned migrant children in Honduras. To flee violence and to seek for family reunification and better life, thousands of children from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador migrate mostly to the United States each year. However, a lot of them return traumatized to Honduras. Those returned migrant children often fail to reintegrate into the educational system that does not address their needs. By developing an adapted curriculum and providing psychological support to these children as well as by raising the awareness of their peers, teachers and local communities about the

discrimination they faced, the project aims to ensure that they finish successfully their educational process.

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reports

Colombian diaspora: truth, memory and reconciliation



Members of the Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission. Picture: Ingrid Guyon/Conciliation

Resources

Over the last decades, millions of men and women, many direct victims of war, have left Colombia in search of a better future. However –beyond economic remittances- Colombia’s

diaspora remains largely invisible as a social and political actor, in Colombia and abroad. As Colombia faces the task of rebuilding its historic memory in order to overcome a violent past and build a peaceful future, Colombians abroad are organising in order to be part of this collective opportunity.

In 2014 a group of women created the Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian Women in the Diaspora (TMRC) in London and Barcelona, with support from Conciliation Resources. The initiative supports the healing of trauma caused by conflict and migration and promotes women's empowerment. The group has developed an innovative methodology of «active memory», documenting the war and migration experience through public testimonies and group analysis, highlighting women's agency beyond victimhood. Furthermore, they transform the testimonials into exhibitions, films, music, poetry and theatre, and some will contribute to formal truth, memory and reconciliation processes in Colombia.

Through a largely voluntary process this informal Commission has achieved: Psycho-social healing, empowerment and reconciliation among around 400 participants, critical analysis of categories related to truth, memory and reconciliation and identifying patterns among women in the diaspora

The Commission has also identified the difficulty for diaspora to access international funding to work for peace and human rights from abroad and is appealing to the donor community to adjust their calls for proposals to include the diaspora.

The work of the Commission is now being replicated in Stockholm, Oslo and Brussels. Helga Flamtermesky, the coordinator of the TMRC describes the goal of the commission as follows: «The Commission seeks to turn women's experiences into knowledge and that knowledge into tools that can be transferred to other women.»

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[links](#)

- [Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian women in the diaspora pilot phase achievements](#)
- [Film: Breaking the silence](#)

reports

Empowering Indonesian migrants



Migrants find protection and new hope in an emergency shelter in Hong Kong. Picture: Mission 21

Every year, several hundreds of thousands of female migrant workers from Indonesia take on positions as live-in maids or nannies in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, East Asia, and the Arabic region. Aside from poor pay and often unbearable living and working conditions there, cases of mistreated and sexually abused Indonesian domestic workers are not uncommon. The women are often isolated by employment agencies and employers and are treated like property. Furthermore, they are barely prepared for this situation, have hardly any knowledge of the local language and culture, are often unaware of their rights, or cannot assert them. Conflicts with employers and employment agencies are not resolved in a timely manner and result in violence.

On the initiative of its Asian partners, Mission 21 supports the work of an emergency center for abused domestic workers in Hong Kong with an integrated empowerment program, involving psychological and legal counseling, as well as a wide range of courses. The new transnational program to combat violence against women puts particular emphasis on stepping up prevention in Indonesia's emigration regions and promoting reintegration. This involves raising awareness about trafficking and prostitution, but also proposing other ways of earning money. When women return home, especially if they are traumatized, have an illegitimate child, or do not have any money, their integration into the existing social and family networks in their homeland proves very difficult and holds potential for conflict. Establishing a network of returned and future female migrant workers allows the women to exchange first-hand experience and advice. Trained facilitators enhance advocacy work for women's rights at a local, national, and international level. They are currently intensively lobbying in the Indonesian parliament for a more humane law on recruiting and placing female migrant workers.

Conflict sensitivity is essential in all stages of the migration cycle. Gender-based structural and direct violence needs to be addressed, as do tensions among domestic workers themselves, who, for example, come from different cultures and religions and have to live together in a confined space in an emergency center in Hong Kong.

Mission 21

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links

- [Projects Hong Kong S.A.R., China](#)
- [Projects Indonesia](#)

reports

Conflict sensitivity and peace education in the context of flight and migration



«No to violence» teacher in a classroom in Zaatari refugee camp. Picture: Dagmar Nolden/Berghof

Conflict-sensitive approaches are also relevant in the context of flight and migration. They allow for visualization and critical examination of the effects of aid. Since 2015, the Berghof Foundation's Peace Education & Global Learning program has therefore been testing and developing various peace-education curricula for working with refugees and for people involved in refugee work in Germany and abroad.

The program works with dialog-oriented and interactive methods, which create space for mutual learning about non-violence, successful handling of conflicts, and sensitivity with regard to their origin. They allow people to learn from and about one another, exchange experiences, alter perspectives, reflect on their own actions, and discuss ways of cooperating to ensure a peaceful coexistence. What is particularly interesting about this space is the composition of participants, which is sometimes unique. In Jordan, for example, Syrian and Jordanian employees from international organizations have come together to take part in a qualification course in the Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps. International social-work students share experiences with their Syrian colleagues in Jordanian refugee camps. In Germany, refugees hold discussions with volunteers and permanent members of staff during training sessions.

A combination of peace-education, theater-education, and resilience-strengthening approaches has proved successful in the work with these target groups.

With the support of the German Federal Foreign Office, the Berghof Foundation plans to continue its work on non-violent education and conflict-sensitive refugee work in Jordan in 2018. In Germany and its neighboring countries, people involved in the area of flight and migration can request training or find inspiration in the numerous publications, such as the peace-education poster series «Conflict-sensitive refugee work».

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links

- [Conflict-sensitive refugee work: Accompanying, qualifying, and encouraging volunteers](#)
- [Non-violent education in Jordan](#)
- [Encounters in Zaatari. Short documentary](#)
- [Conflict-sensitive refugee assistance. Documentation of project activities in Jordan 2016](#)
- [Workshops for conflict sensitive refugee work \(german\)](#)

reports

Statelessness,

expulsions and human rights violations on the island of Haiti



Arrival of Haitian migrants who were deported at the border to Belladère. Picture: SJMSFw-Haïti

In September 2013 the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic adopted a decision depriving of their Dominican nationality anyone born in the Dominican Republic between 1929 and 2010 whose parents were «in transit» at the time of their birth. More than 200,000 people, the vast majority of them of Haitian descent, have been made stateless as a result.

This action is the fruit of an ultranationalist ideology tinged with anti-Haitianism, which sees Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic as a «peaceful invasion». Yet for a long time this migration was encouraged by the Dominican government because it provided a source of cheap labor, especially for the sugar industry. When that industry began to decline in the 1980s, the presence of these Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent was no longer seen in a positive light.

From June 2015, mass expulsions of Haitian nationals from Dominican territory were carried out on the pretext that these people were not in the country legally. Yet people with valid residence documents were also expelled, along with Dominicans of Haitian descent. Cases of violence, separation of families and destruction of migrants' identity papers were also reported.

Eirene Suisse is an organization working to promote peace, which operates in the field of cooperation through personnel exchanges. For several years we have been supporting Haitian NGOs defending migrants' rights, such as SJM/SFw-Haïti (Service Jésuite aux

Migrants/Solidarite Fwontalye-Haïti) and GARR (Groupe d'appui aux Rapatriés et Réfugiés). Two Swiss volunteers are currently working to strengthen the communication sector and advocate for these two organizations, with the aim of helping those expelled from the Dominican Republic to access their rights.

GARR and SJM/SFw-Haïti are working in coordination with other civil society organizations in Haiti and the Dominican Republic to promote respect for human rights and harmonious relations between the two countries.

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- Guerrero Johnny, « El discurso de invasión pacífica haitiana y unificación de la isla » (spanish)

reports

Preventing violence: Social reintegration of deported young migrants in El Salvador



Anti-gang police arrest boys suspected to be gang members. Picture: José Ramiro Láinez Sorto / terre des hommes Switzerland

The migration of young people from Central America to the USA has increased dramatically in recent years. The main cause to flee is closely related to the chronic violence in the region. At the same time, the border control in the US and Mexico has been intensified, especially due to Trump government's immigration policy, leading to an enlarged number of deportations of these youth migrants.

These deported youth are facing multiple traumas. In many cases they have fled from violence in their home country, due to gang control, colloquially named «maras», groups known for exploitation, murders and forced recruitment. When they leave their violence-prone countries on the way north, these young people are confronted with deadly threats on the way. Finally, once they reach the borders, they have to cope with detention and deportation by US or Mexican migration officials. They return to their home country broken, frustrated and hopeless. On top of that in their home communities the young returnees often are stigmatized as criminals and seen as «losers». Without systematic reintegration programs, the risks that these young returnees get involved with the widespread criminal youth gangs or in drug traffic are high.

Therefore, terre des hommes schweiz terre des hommes Deutschland in cooperation with their local partner organisation ACISAM are supporting a pilot project on psychosocial support (PSS) for these young migrants in El Salvador . By doing so, they are filling in a crucial gap in state social programs. The projects aims to raise the specific needs of young returnees through a participatory survey and community discussion groups that will contribute breaking the negative stigmatization of young returnees. Likewise, the findings will be the basis for the development of more comprehensive concepts for the reintegration of young people. Psychosocial approaches are key to overcome the multiple traumas. Only with targeted and integrated approaches to social reintegration it can be prevented that these young people get involved in the vicious circle of violence.

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links

- [Central America: Increasing number of unaccompanied minors \(german\)](#)
- [Surge in number of unaccompanied minors in Central America as violence escalates](#)
- [We support children in El Salvador \(german\)](#)
- [Documentary on migration from Central America to the US \(german\) 1](#)
- [Documentary on migration from Central America to the US \(german\) 2](#)

reports

Creating prospects: Caritas Switzerland in Colombia



The Fe y Alegría organization's training center in Bogotá, Colombia. Picture: Caritas Switzerland

Those working in areas of conflict are inevitably faced with issues surrounding migration. In delicate contexts and situations involving ongoing crises, it is especially necessary to

alleviate acute hardship and make a long-lasting contribution to the inclusion of migrants in society. Nevertheless, the challenges of this field of work are complex, which may be a result of increased mobility and an urban environment. This is illustrated by an example of Caritas Switzerland's work in Colombia.

Over the course of an ongoing conflict in their own country lasting more than 50 years, upward of seven million people have been forced to flee their homes. Even after the Colombian government and the FARC signed a peace deal in late 2016, this expulsion still continues. Many of those affected move to cities and urban centers, where they continue to face violence from criminal gangs and armed groups in addition to unemployment and poverty. To protect their children from recruitment, abuse, and illegal dealings, many families are forced time and time again to seek refuge in other districts and cities. These repeated expulsions ruin the chance for teenagers and young adults to earn money and receive an education.

Working with local partners at the interface of emergency aid and long-term work, Caritas Switzerland actively fosters the peaceful integration of internally displaced persons, focusing on social, psychological, legal and political support for young people in violent urban areas. Young adults are also given access to vocational training and the chance to generate income. Conflict- and gender-sensitive approaches are crucial in this respect. By promoting youth organizations embedded in the local community and a vast network of various actors, the project has the aim of making a sustainable impact in this volatile environment.

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- [Caritas: New prospects for vulnerable young people \(german\)](#)

reports

Developments in Switzerland's foreign policy on migration

The 2011 Report on International Cooperation on Migration (ICM) forms the basis of the Swiss foreign policy on migration. It asserts that the main actors of the Swiss foreign policy on migration are the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Human Security Division (HSD), the geographical departments of the Directorate of Political Affairs of the FDFA, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Federal Office of Police, the Border Guard, and the Federal Office of Public Health. The HSD also drew up its own section on the foreign policy on migration this summer.

In late 2016, the Federal Council evaluated the existing structures of international cooperation on migration and compiled the results into a report. The aim was to highlight the possibilities for strengthening the partnership between the departments involved in the foreign policy on migration and for more efficient structuring of the ICM's strategy.

The duties of Eduard Gnesa, the special envoy for international cooperation on migration issues who retired in early 2017, were divided among the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) and the FDFA. In the FDFA, a new ambassador position for development, flight, and migration was created, which was filled by Pietro Mona in September 2017.

links

- [2011 Report on International Cooperation on Migration](#)
- [The Federal Council's 2016 Report on the Foreign Policy Activities in the Area of Migration in Switzerland](#)
- [Coordination Body of the Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration \(ICM\)](#)
- [The HSD's foreign policy on migration](#)

in depth

The migration-conflict nexus

According to PRIO's Trends in Armed Conflict and the Global Peace Index 2017, the number of violent conflicts and the number of affected civilians have increased over the last decade. At the same time, migration flows have emerged, the extent of which were reminiscent of the post-World War II era. Within this context, research is intensively focused on the connection between conflict and migration.

In his article «Migrants, Refugees and Insecurity. Current Threats to Peace?», Robert Lohrmann outlines that there has been a shift in the perception of threats to international order since the end of the Cold War. Non-military threats increasingly replaced military scenarios as the focus of Western security actors. According to Lohrmann, migration flows were considered a threat to peace in three equal ways: as a threat to the national security

in the sending, receiving and transit countries, as a risk to international security, and as a danger to the security of individuals. He also asserts that migration movements themselves are for the most part a reaction to domestic conflicts, systematic human rights violations, poverty crises, and natural disasters. However, he writes that illegal migration flows, in particular, lead to more conflicts in turn because they have an impact on the prevailing economic, ethno-religious, and linguistic-cultural conditions in the host societies of the transit and destination countries.

A perspective like this, however, leads to a problematic fixation on the negative correlation between migration and conflicts: Migration arises from conflicts and leads to new conflicts. Various researchers therefore questioned this unyielding migration-conflict nexus and emphasized the positive influences of migration, such as on the global job market, international cooperation, the humanitarian situation of those affected, and the economic developments of the countries of origin owing to diaspora payments.

In his well-heeded article «Migration and Development. A Theoretical Perspective», Hein de Haas in turn points out that the discourse on migration has been swinging back and forth between migration as a «security risk» and a «driver of development» for a long time now. According to de Haas, the lines of argumentation chosen by decision-makers in politics, industry, and research should therefore always be seen in the context of their contemporary, ideological influences.

It can therefore be concluded that exaggerated assessments of the positive impact of net migration on the global order of the world must be viewed in a critical light. Otherwise, the causes of conflicts and the processes necessary for transforming conflict run the risk of falling to the wayside. On the other hand, migration is not always a result of conflict and does not necessarily lead to more conflicts. It also opens up opportunities for state development and stabilizing human security. This potential ought to be pursued rather than ignored.

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[links](#)

- [De Haas, Hein: Migration and Development. A Theoretical Perspective](#)
- [Lohrmann, Reinhard: Migrants, Refugees and Insecurity. Current Threats to Peace?](#)
- [Peace Research Institute Oslo \(PRIO\): Trends in Armed Conflict](#)
- [Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Peace Index 2017](#)

KOFF member organizations

Geneva Peace Week 2017 – Prevention across sectors & institutions

Geneva is home to a large number of international organizations. Geneva Peace Week offers an opportunity to connect and highlight the work of these actors and to expand the space for dialogue about building peace and resolving conflict.

In this year's Geneva Peace Week from the 6-10 November 2017 a total of 4'000 people attended 50 events, organized by over 90 organizations featuring more than 150 speakers. In its fourth edition, Geneva Peace Week focused on the theme of prevention and effective pathways for implementation. Various experts including Ana Maria Menéndez Pérez, Senior Advisor of the Secretary-General on Policy, United Nations came together to look at future trends in prevention. Menéndez stated that the UN cannot do everything by itself and is better when it works in partnerships with others. According to her, the only way forward is an inclusive approach, which enables all actors to take part in the discussion.

Furthermore, a discussion on the UN/World Bank Prevention Study «Pathways for Peace – Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict» took place. Key messages from the Study included that prevention saves lives and is cost effective, states hold primary responsibility for prevention but efforts need to also include other actors such as civil society and the private sector, economic development does not automatically create peace and prevention needs a long-term perspective.

Another focus of the event was the role of digital technology for conflict prevention. It was clear that technology certainly has important implications and some sessions highlighted the potential of e-commerce, big data, artificial intelligence and geographic information systems. On the other hand, participants also focused on the ways in which digital technologies have given rise to increased threats, like the risk of cyber conflict.

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links

- [Geneva Peace Week Webseite](#)
- [Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict](#)

Women's PeaceTable in Switzerland

On November 2, 2017, PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG) organized a Women's PeaceTable in Switzerland. 30 of these round tables were held around the world in fall 2017. Women in Afghanistan, Colombia, Mali, Nepal, and numerous other countries affected by conflict discussed their vision of peace.

The Women's PeaceTable in Switzerland has now revealed the results of the round tables that took place around the world and has posed the question: How does Switzerland promote the actual participation of women in peace processes? Prof. Miriam Coronel Ferrer from the Philippines, one of the first women to sign a peace agreement as a chief negotiator, Dr. Thania Paffenholz from the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Ambassador Heidi Grau, and member of the National Council Margret Kiener Nellen discussed a gender-sensitive processing of conflicts, political participation, inclusion, economic and social security – to name just a few of the demands of the 30 Women's PeaceTables. PWAG is committed to ensuring that these demands see their way into the new National Action Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.

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[links](#)

- [Women's PeaceTable](#)

Agenda 2030 – Switzerland holds discussions

On October 23, 2017, the government invited interested actors from administration, politics, civil society, industry, and research to the «Agenda 2030 – Herausforderungen für die Schweiz» («Challenges for Switzerland») event. The meeting was held as part of the 2030 Dialogue. In teams, participants discussed ten key topics that have been determined for the purpose of implementing Agenda 2030 following the government's review. The event also saw the presentation of the initial conclusions from the government's online questionnaire, in which civil society, the private sector, and academia had the opportunity to give their opinion on the implementation status of the 17 sustainability goals in Switzerland.

KOFF particularly noticed that the weighting given to goal 16 on peace and justice was relatively low. In addition to the clear mandate of its members, this is another reason for KOFF to become involved in the recently launched Agenda 2030 platform and to point out the significance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding for sustainable development. Anna Leissing was elected as a member of the platform's management board. She will rise to the challenge and contribute to designing multi-stakeholder processes to develop and

strengthen the platform, armed with KOFF's experience.

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news

First Annual Conference of the Swiss Civil Society Platform on Migration and Development

An attempt to feed policy dialogue on Migration and Development with the experience of the Swiss Civil Society

On the 10th of November 2017, the Swiss Civil Society Platform on Migration and Development (mdplatform.ch) organised its first annual conference. Established in 2016, mdplatform.ch is a space for information sharing among actors interested in the linkages between migration and development (M&D). The initiative is coordinated by Caritas Schweiz and HELVETAS and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It counts today more than 80 members.

Entitled, «Migration and Development: Swiss Initiatives and International Debates – Priorities and experiences of the Swiss Civil Society in the area of Migration and Development at local and international level», the ambition of this first conference was double. A first objective was to present and learn from [mdplatform](http://mdplatform.ch) members' practical experience. Members work on different issues of migration (e.g. human rights, integration, labour migration), different “moments” within the migration cycle (from pre-departure to return) and in different locations (in Switzerland and abroad). Exchanging on their experience and the challenges met in day-to-day work served identifying policy implications to be discussed in the second part of the conference. This second part took the form of a moderated panel discussion gathering the Mayor of Bern, the Swiss Ambassador on Development, Forced Displacement and Migration, and representatives of the University of Bern, Albinfo.ch, Somaliland Swiss Association and Caritas Schweiz.

Within this frame, panellists could exchange on their respective priorities in the broader context of the ongoing negotiations on a Global Compact on Migration (GCM) taking place in the framework of the United Nations.

Both the morning and afternoon sessions highlighted a set of common concerns. Participants underlined the need to support a change in the way migration is perceived. While migration is often portrayed as a burden, a closer look at the phenomenon shows the benefits of «mobility». These benefits go beyond financial means to include for instance technological transfers, know-how and cultural exchanges. Migration was described not only as a historic reality, but as an integral component of development and an «oxygen for society». These remarks underlined the importance to set up the framework conditions necessary to maximize these positive developments while working in parallel on the causes and for improved protection in cases of forced migration.

The negotiations on the GCM were described as an opportunity to contribute to this change of perception and to improve the governance of migration with a focus on the protection of migrants' rights. Participants insisted on the need to firmly anchor the GCM in the human rights framework and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It was also emphasized that it shall contain concrete and measureable commitments to ensure their actual implementation while addressing the remaining protection gaps. The multi-stakeholders approach that has characterized the global compact consultations process will need to be strengthened in the implementation. Participants insisted on the important role and responsibilities of the civil society and private sector for effective implementation at national and international level. Finally, the need for continued efforts on policy coherence for development was emphasized on several occasions.

This first conference constituted an attempt to feed policy dialogue on M&D with the experience of a very diverse set of civil society actors active on the issue. It led to rich, constructive discussions and mutual learning and provides a solid ground for continued exchange in the future.

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Peace Mediation Training

Understand the challenges mediators face when facilitating dialogue and searching for peace agreements and train your negotiation and mediation skills.

Mediators bring conflict parties to the negotiating table and support them in finding agreements. In the last decade the range of actors in mediation has broadened beyond diplomats and UN experts and frequently professional mediators are brought in. Participants gain insights into the challenges that mediators face when facilitating dialogue and searching for peace agreements.

The course takes place the 2nd and the 3th of march in Basel.

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links

- [Further Information](#)
- [Application until the 31 December 2017](#)
- [Upcoming individual courses](#)

Upcoming events

14 and 15 January 2018

Basel, Switzerland

[Basel Peace Forum is rethinking peace](#)

Despite many international efforts, setbacks have called earlier successes of peacebuilding into question. The Basel Peace Forum wants to reflect on previous endeavors and inspire new, unconventional ideas.

[Further information](#)

Until 28 February 2018

Basel, Switzerland

[Register for the swisspeace training on «Preventing Violent Conflicts »](#)

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 how violence and its escalation could have been prevented. This course provides insights into and explores practical approaches of the concept of conflict prevention and the prevention of violent extremism and mass atrocities. It will take place on May 2-4, 2018.

[Further Information](#)

[Register until February 28, 2018](#)

Until 31 January 2018

Basel, Switzerland

[Register for the swisspeace Certificate of Advanced Studies \(CAS\) in «Religion & Konflikt»](#)

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 2018 and consists of 17 course days (from Thursday to Saturday) which will be held in German.

[Further information](#)

[Registration until January 31, 2018](#)

Until 31 January 2018

Basel, Switzerland

[Register for the swisspeace training on «Gender in Conflict & Peacebuilding»](#)

The Gender in Conflict & Peacebuilding training will take place on April 13-14, 2018. It focuses on gender equality in peacebuilding and applies a gender perspective on conflicts and conflict transformation. This course can be attended either as a single course or as part

of swisspeace's Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Civilian Peacebuilding Essentials 2017/2018 Program.

[Further information](#)

[Register until January 31, 2018](#)

New publication

[Study-book «Global Peace and Security: International Crisis and Conflict Management – with 90 key lessons»](#)

Successful Peace- and State-building are one of the most discussed and challenging subjects: How can the international society react on the challenge of conflict and fragility? What is the role of the EU? How can actors work together by a «Comprehensive Approach»? Are there signs of a solution for more resilience and prevention within the UN?

[Further information about the book](#)

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La plateforme suisse de promotion de la paix
The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

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Alliance Sud	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	Frauenbund
APRED	IAMANEH Schweiz	Society for Threatened Peoples
artasfoundation	Interpeace	Switzerland
Baha'i	Lucerne Initiative for Peace and	Solidar Switzerland
Brücke · Le pont	Security (LIPS)	SOS Children's Villages
Caritas Switzerland	medico international schweiz	Stiftung für Integrale
Caux – Initiatives of Change	MIR Switzerland	Friedensförderung
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