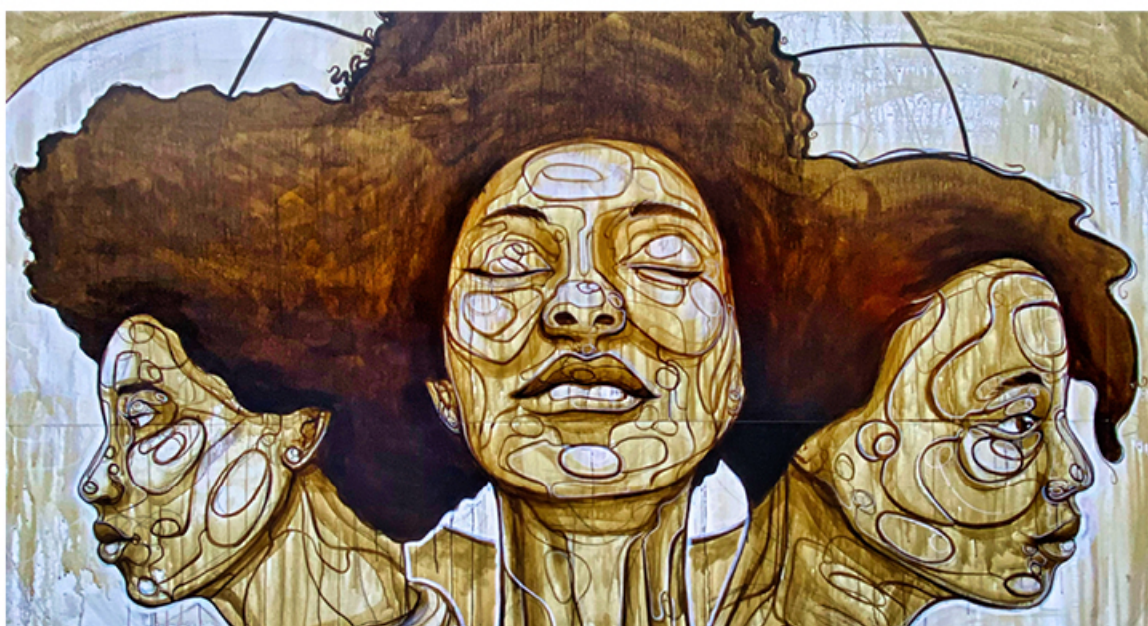


No. 167

September 2020

à propos

The KOFF
Peacebuilding
Magazine



Gender equality & Peace:
Celebrate or Recriminate?

1

focus

[Not much to celebrate](#)

2

reports

[Changing the care-less interpretation of UNSCR 1325](#)

[Moving mediation beyond women's spaces](#)

[Protecting female human rights defenders in Central and South America](#)

[A shy celebration](#)

[1325: Rhetoric or reality?](#)

[More equality needed for a deserved celebration](#)

[New ways of thinking marriage](#)

[More justice, less violence related to gender](#)

[The police came by day and the militia by night](#)

[The body at the center of politics](#)

[A time for celebration, reflection and perseverance](#)

3

in depth

[Foundations for Gender Inclusive Peacebuilding](#)

4

news

[Reimagining Victory digital series](#)

[Masculinities, Marginalization, Militarism \(virtual course, 6 half-days\)](#)

[CAS Civilian Peacebuilding Essentials](#)

5

calender

[Events & News](#)

editorial

“We are fashioning new ways to involve women at all stages of negotiation and decision-making. From kitchen tables to peace tables women propose to turn the tables on the status quo,” said the feminist Bella Abzug during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 25 years ago. Subsequently, 189 countries committed themselves to achieve gender equality and respect the rights of women and girls by adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

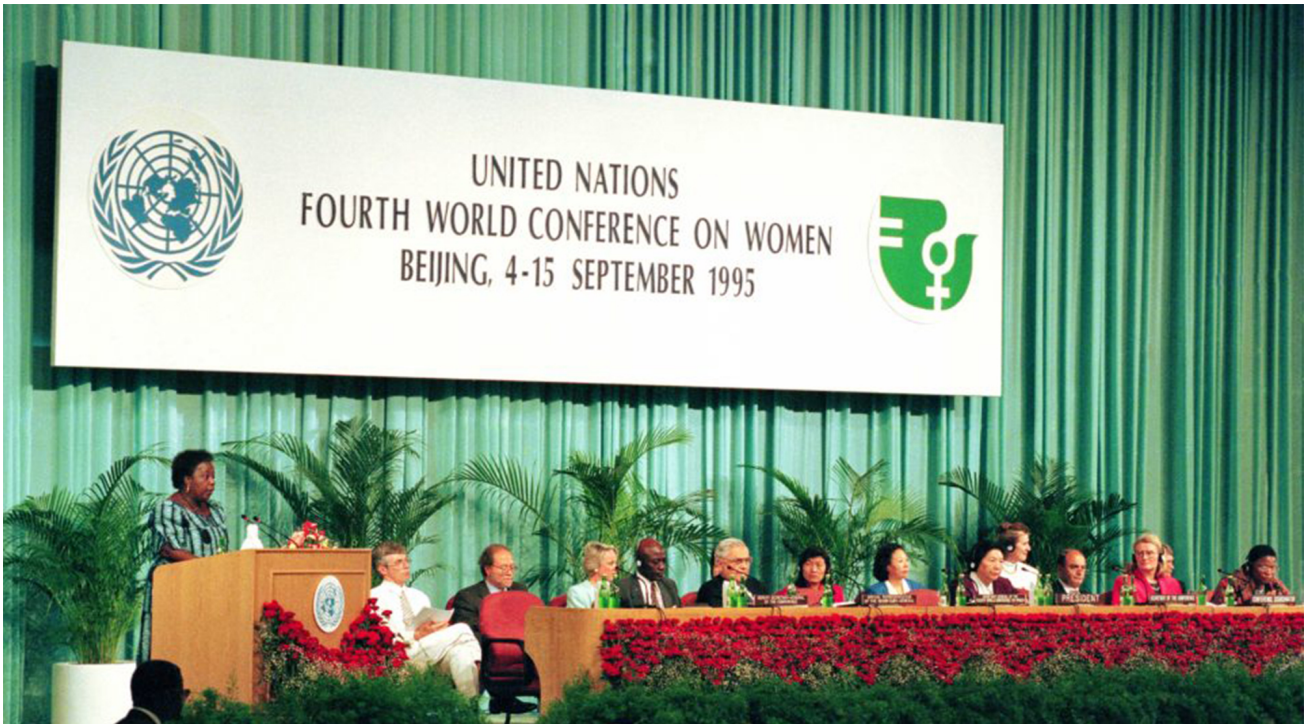
Five years later, another milestone was reached regarding Women, Peace, and Security; UN Resolution 1325 was unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council. It calls for women’s participation in conflict prevention and peace processes, the protection of women during conflict – including against sexual violence – and the prevention of violence against women through the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality.

For some, 2020 is a year of celebration; others will refrain from any festivity given the progress that remains to be made. In this September issue, the critical voices of Switzerland’s civil society explain why.

Wishing you a pleasant read,

Sanjally Jobarteh, Editor of KOFF magazine

Not much to celebrate



Fourth World Conference on Women Opens in Beijing, 04 September 1995, Milton Grant, ©UN Photo

20 years on from the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” and 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women’s rights and gender equality – back then, the adoption of these instruments was welcomed, but where do we stand today? Interview with Flurina Derungs, Director of PeaceWomen Across the Globe.

Is there a good reason to celebrate the anniversaries of these international instruments today?

No. These documents were adopted in the “golden 1990s” when a lot was possible. This was the time when women’s rights were recognized as human rights. The Balkan Wars and the Rwandan genocide made violence against women as a weapon of war so visible, that the UN Security Council took action by adopting Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security”. In Switzerland, too, the Gender Equality Act, unpunished termination of pregnancy, and the official recognition of domestic violence as a crime saw the light of day in this period. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDAP), passed in 1995, was a visionary document. However, 20 years later, it became clear that this golden age is over. I was there in 2015, when the UN assessed the status of the BDAP’s implementation. A final document was deliberately not negotiated because of the danger that Beijing+20 could fall short of the situation in 1995. There have been some successes, but unfortunately, we are not much further along today.

What are the most important achievements of these instruments?

Resolution 1325 is a milestone in international peace policy. It recognizes violence against women as a weapon of war, condemns it, and demands that the concerns of women be taken into account during peace agreements, and that women must participate in peace processes. However, the BDAP and Resolution 1325 are actually part of a bundle of women's rights that date back to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). As violence against women was considered a private affair at the time, the CEDAW does not make reference to it. Only thanks to the women's movement and advocacy work has violence against women become a topic which is discussed openly. Resolution 1325 is part of this context.

Which achievements can be specifically traced back to Beijing?

The concept of gender mainstreaming was launched in Beijing. Thanks to the BDAP, gender equality and the empowerment of women play a transversal role in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and have become an objective in their own right. Care work performed by women was recognized in Beijing as a critical factor in development and peace.

How do you recognize the achievements and challenges of your work?

The work of PeaceWomen Across the Globe is based on these human rights instruments. In our network, different women stand for the increasing participation of women in peace processes, such as Miriam Coronel Ferrer from the Philippines – the first female chief negotiator in peace talks. In 2014, she signed the peace agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. However, a 50:50 participation by women in peace processes is still a long way off. The UN study analyzing peace negotiations between 1998 and 2018 shows that women only made up 3% of the mediators and 4% of signatories. Representation of women on a purely numerical basis, however, does not guarantee their substantial participation in peace processes or the implementation of gender-related requirements in peace agreements. In addition, the "Prevention of Violent Extremism" project, which emerged in the context of the 9/11 attacks, hijacked the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda, which was also a setback for gender justice.

Where does Switzerland stand on the implementation of these instruments?

Thanks to the legal amendments mentioned at the start, legal equality between women and men has practically been achieved. However, domestic violence, unequal pay, and unpaid care work are just three of the areas where this equality has not yet actually been achieved. Switzerland has made a strong international commitment to an independent gender objective and to the transversal embedding of gender equality into Agenda 2030. It was one of the first of 84 countries to draw up a National Action Plan to implement Resolution 1325 and also created a Beijing+25 report on the status of its implementation. However, the new Swiss Dispatch on International Cooperation no longer contains a specific goal for gender equality.

How is Swiss civil society participating in the Swiss National Action Plan (NAP) 1325?

PeaceWomen Across the Globe – alongside KOFF and the peace organization cfd – is coordinating civil society support for the now 4th NAP, with the aim of raising awareness about it and making peacebuilding more relevant in practice. We are trying to create a stronger link between practice and policy by engaging in a dialog with the government. In our work, I am constantly reminded of the gap between these kinds of international documents and the everyday life of women – the significance of these documents is undisputed, but this divide is striking.

What findings have been brought to light by the coronavirus pandemic that are relevant to these instruments?

Anyone who was disadvantaged before the coronavirus crisis was in an even worse position during the crisis. The crisis has brought to light the manifold and intersectional discrimination against women, and the huge inequalities in the care sector, for example. It awaits to be seen where savings will be made, but the financial crisis of 2008 showed that cuts came at the expense of women.

What have these instruments brought about if women are among the victims of these kinds of crises?

A crisis of this sort would probably have had even worse outcomes for women in the 1960s. Despite the progress, a great disparity still exists between legal and actual equality. In 2015, I pinned my hopes on Agenda 2030. But today, I feel somewhat disillusioned.

That doesn't sound like a hopeful view of the future.

There are good points – the “Me Too” movement, the Women’s Strike, and the “women’s landslide” in the elections. The “Swiss law, not foreign judges” initiative and the “Self-determination Initiative” showed that human rights must continue to be defended. When voters clearly rejected the 2018 initiative, this also showed that a civil society that stands together and mobilizes the people can bring down the initiative of a financially powerful opponent. It is precisely such issues as gender equality and peace that need strong women’s organizations and a civil society based on solidarity, and this gives me hope.

[Interview of](#)

Flurina Derungs

flurina.derungs@1000peacewomen.org

Director, PeaceWomen Accross the Globe (PWAG)

[Interviewer](#)

Christina Stucky, PeaceWomen Accross the Globe (PWAG)

christina.stucky@1000peacewomen.org

Communications Manager

[links](#)

- [PeaceWomen Accross the Globe \(PWAG\)](#)

reports

Changing the care-less interpretation of UNSCR 1325



Matthias Zomer, 2016 / pexels

KOFF's ongoing project with cfd and PWAG taps into the notion of participation behind UNSCR 1325. It has been widely noted that this often boils down to counting women instead of making them count. This is what we aim to change!

At the heart of the resolution were women from the Global South, who were not only affected by conflict but felt alienated by how international diplomacy tended to settle them. It was blind to *de facto* peacebuilding done by women. Women were and still are today, the predominant civilian actors, who in the middle of war seek non-violent means and build dialogue across entrenched divisions. They are the ones who in the most adverse circumstances still find ingenious ways to feed their family. All of this is care-work. For care encompasses the daily chores to the emotional labor of empathizing and de-escalating. But as with un(der)paid care-work in peaceful contexts, in violent conflict it is made invisible. That way it remains unacknowledged that this care-work lays the very foundation of our sense of security. We are inherently relational beings. None of us could step out there every morning if it were not for the care we are discreetly given. It is what enables us. It is also what enables surviving, settling conflicts, and reconciling divided communities.

As such, we do not stop at participation of women equaling having a quota of women at the

table. We take the anniversary to ask for more. We want women to be recognized for the participation in peace processes that they are already very much doing based on their relentless care-work. From this vantage point, their seat at the table is the very least. What would take the resolution further is to recognize care-work for the labor and contribution it is and to therefore also see it as a burden that has to be equally distributed. Building sustainable peaceful societies must thus mean to both insist on budgets that nationalize part of the care responsibilities, and to have policies that engage men in care-work. Focusing exclusively on women's "empowerment" will fall short of the challenge.

Lastly and very importantly, recognizing female care-work as the provision of basic security will allow us to finally re-connect UNSCR 1325 to domestic politics. The Global North, including Switzerland, have comfortably interpreted the resolution's relevance only in foreign policy terms. This not only reifies problematic international power asymmetries. Crucially, it obliterates the existence of violence and exclusion within those countries, as if it stopped at national – or European for that matter – borders. In Switzerland, where every two weeks a femicide takes place, where one in five women has experienced sexualized violence, and where women were at the forefront of providing the care to carry us over the COVID pandemic, yet were disproportionately under-represented in the corresponding key decision-making processes, UNSCR 1325 very much has domestic pertinence.

[swisspeace](#)

Leandra Bias

Leandra.Bias@swisspeace.ch

Gender & Peacebuilding Advisor

[links](#)

- [swisspeace](#)

reports

Moving mediation beyond women's spaces



Women Mediators across the Commonwealth training, London, 2019 / Conciliation Resources

The importance of UNSCR Resolution 1325 and the increased participation of women in peacebuilding has never been greater. The coronavirus pandemic has impacted women and girls in multiple and different ways, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states. Women have been at the forefront of interventions, despite the continued lack of support or recognition for their work.

Climate change, environmental degradation, and subsequent resource scarcity and migration demand from communities to become ever more resilient, often in a context of poor economic and institutional structures. In the face of such challenges, the need for communities to have their own established and inclusive mechanisms for resolving conflicts is essential.

The Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) network, hosted by Conciliation Resources, has been documenting stories of women mediators working across multiple spaces at the community, national and regional levels, and in a range of sectors. Made from a diverse group of women in terms of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, the work of WMC members focuses on wide-ranging issues from climate change to indigenous familial disputes to engagement in national and regional peace processes.

WMC members face multiple challenges, including a lack of funding, threats to personal security, and exclusion due to cultural and institutional gender bias. Despite this, they are finding ways to effectively mediate, bringing thematic expertise and alternative, inclusive perspectives to a wide range of issues from election monitoring and land conflicts to engaging with armed groups.

Women mediators play a vital role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention but with little visibility, recognition, or protection. It is through ongoing and concerted efforts to overcome the barriers presented, by proactively stepping up to mediate where the situation demands and working in careful collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders. WMC members are

bringing communities together to dialogue and resolve conflict through peaceful and non-violent means.

Strategies include gradually building up credibility to form bonds and create inroads where it may at first seem impossible; knowing their capabilities and when to step back, to allow others to take center stage; and creatively sustaining relationships. In addition, women mediators have detailed knowledge of the skills, techniques, and processes required for inclusive mediation and adapt these to fit the cultural context and needs of the stakeholders and communities involved.

Recognition for work that is being led by younger women mediators should also be valued as an essential part of peacebuilding implementation, along with the need to translate policies to the local reality and to provide access to adequate funding to bring in the unheard voices.

Strategic leadership beyond the international and national commitments on paper to embrace the 'how' and the creation of practical mechanisms for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 should be an urgent priority – with the understanding that women and girl's rights to decision-making will contribute to more peaceful societies for all. This will require global and national leadership to focus on creating an enabling environment for more diverse women to be seen and heard in key influencing and decision-making positions at all levels and across all sectors so that the flexible, sustainable and timely funding, that is continually advocated for, is not in vain.

* Conciliation Resources is grateful to all the WMC members for their time and commitment to the network and their participation in this research.

[Conciliation resources](#)

Chantelle Cummings

edeeming@c-r.org

Senior Adviser, Gender and Peacebuilding

[links](#)

- [Conciliations resources](#)
- [Women Mediators across the Commonwealth](#)

reports

Protecting female human rights defenders in Central and South

America



Honduras, 2019 © Peace Brigades International

Defending human rights in Central and South America is a high-risk undertaking, especially for women. However, despite the risks, women play a significant role in protecting land rights and the environment and working for gender equality; this helps to create room for peace to flourish.

The stated aim of sub-goal 6 of the focus area “Effective inclusion of women in conflict prevention” in Switzerland’s 4th National Action Plan 1325 on women, peace and security is to “recognize the particularly precarious position of female human rights defenders and to protect their work”. International awareness and recognition are important for protecting female human rights defenders, but the gender-specific risks and obstacles confronting these women also require state action to be taken, with an intersectional gender focus.

The criminalization of human rights defenders, the failure to punish offenders and the militarization of public safety – dangerous contradictions in Honduras

According to the PBI report called “Defending the land has a woman’s name”, between 2013 and 2018, 642 female human rights defenders were prosecuted in Honduras, many of them in connection with their activism on land rights and environmental protection. Furthermore, five female human rights defenders have been killed in Honduras in the last two years, and between 2016 and 2017 there were a total of 1,232 attacks on female human rights defenders, their families or their organizations. Yet the perpetrators often go unpunished.

Over the last six years, state expenditure on security and defense has increased by 112% and the presence of military police to ensure public safety is increasing all the time. For female human rights defenders, who are usually also responsible for their families

alongside their activism, encounters with the military police are often extremely traumatic. María Felícita López, coordinator of the Lenca indigenous peace movement of La Paz – Honduras (MILPAH), told us how her home was searched at night by the military police: “They fired three times at my eleven-year-old son, but thank God they didn’t hit him. They called me a slut and a drug dealer.” The women from MILPAH who were attacked that night reported the incident, but the perpetrators were released without charge – a widespread, systemic problem.

In 2015, a national decree on the protection of female human rights defenders was issued, but the implementation of the regulations has been patchy. There are complaints that funding, transparency and trained personnel are all in short supply. At the instigation of civil society, the ruling was extended to include preventive, economic and psychosocial measures, but it is normally the police who are responsible for implementing it. Female activists have to endure sexist treatment by male police officers, so the police become both perpetrators and protectors at the same time. In any case, the local authorities are often not familiar with the regulations and have received no training on issues of gender, human rights or safety precautions. Many female human rights defenders therefore distrust the national authorities and only 18.5% of the activists who fall victim to attacks take legal action.

Gender perspective in state institutions and the legislation on protecting human rights defenders

In Honduras and other countries in which Peace Brigades International (PBI) operates, impunity from prosecution, the militarization of public safety and the criminalization of legitimate human rights work all pose great problems for female human rights defenders. While these problems do also affect men, for women the discrimination because of their gender is a further obstacle which has, as yet, not been adequately taken into account in laws and state institutions. That is why, in addition to physically accompanying female activists and providing psychosocial support, PBI also carries out advocacy work and is in constant contact with local and national authorities in an attempt to stop the stigmatization, criminalization and persecution and ensure that the important work of female human rights defenders in the interests of peace is recognized and protected.

[Peace Brigades International \(PBI\)](#)

Larissa Mina Lee

larissa.lee@peacebrigades.ch

Assistant project support and fundraising

[links](#)

- [Peace Brigades International](#)
- [report “Defending the land has a woman’s name” - PBI Honduras](#)
- [National decree on the protection of female human rights defenders](#)
- [Report on the situation of women human rights defenders - National Network of women human rights defenders in Honduras](#)

A shy celebration



Women's Strike, Bundesplatz, 2019 © Daniel Stampfli

2020 is an important year for women's rights anniversaries: 20 years ago, UN Resolution 1325 was adopted. 25 years ago, the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing drew up a comprehensive list of measures to be taken in twelve areas, known as the Beijing Platform for Action. And 40 years ago, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) came into effect. So is there a reason for celebrating women's rights? No, because progress is slow and frequently the action taken to support women has no effect.

International instruments do not only provide a legal framework for gender equality in the world but also have an important part to play in promoting peace. "The more gender equality there is in a society, the more peaceful it is," says Pascale Baeriswyl, the new Head of Switzerland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

By ratifying these agreements, Switzerland committed itself to work on reaching gender equality objectives both at home and abroad. However, the figures are dispiriting: only 4% of the participants at the negotiating table in peace processes are women; they are hugely underrepresented. In Swiss companies, women occupy only 30% of the leadership positions. The Swiss Covid-19 task force consists of two women and five times as many men. At the same time – as the coronavirus crisis has shown – women are significantly over-represented in care professions. They also still carry out the vast majority of low paid and unpaid domestic and care work. The statistics on domestic violence reveal how widespread and commonplace violence against women is in our society. In Switzerland, there is still no Equal Opportunities Office in 9 out of the 26 cantons, despite the CEDAW recommendations. Is this a reason for despair? No, but our impatience must continue to be a driving force for change.

It takes pressure from the streets

On 14 June 2019, the women's strike mobilized over half a million people. The demands for greater institutional involvement and for international conventions to be implemented in practice did not go unheard. Following last October's elections, the proportion of women in Parliament rose to 42%. Politicians male and female, on the right and on the left of the political spectrum, are now saying openly that a review of the Equal Pay Act is not enough to correct the systemic inequalities. Furthermore, a feminist special session on 11th September 2020 questioned the federal policy on crisis management during the pandemic – a policy that barely takes any account of the realities of life for women.

Similarly, in the year 2000, Resolution 1325 would not have been accepted by the UN Security Council without pressure from the streets. Twenty years ago, women were demanding equal participation in decision-making processes on peace policies. The demand today is still the same as it was then. If they are to participate as equals, women must be empowered politically and economically. Twenty years after the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 came into force, we can see some progress towards positive, egalitarian peace. That encourages us, as representatives of civilian society, to continue to demand clear institutional and political responses to our demands. We do not despair, but nor are we celebrating (yet). We will continue to work stubbornly and with conviction, and together we will achieve our goals — hopefully before the 40th anniversary!

[cfd - The Feminist Peace Organization](#)

Regula Brunner

assistenz.cfd@cfd-ch.org

Program & Communications Officer

[links](#)

- [cfd - The feminist Peace Organization](#)

reports

1325: Rhetoric or reality?



A survivor of sexual violence by Boko Haram, who received counselling and took part in community workshops to tackle the stigma faced by women and girls when they return home. Carol Allen-Storey/International Alert

Working on Women Peace & Security (WPS) issues since the 1990s, International Alert was directly involved in the global advocacy campaign “From the Village to the Negotiating Table” which helped to successfully influence the adoption of Resolution 1325 twenty years ago. The resolution was built on the foundations of a feminist movement, underpinned by gains fought for by women’s peace organizations over several decades.

Since 1990 International Alert has implemented WPS projects in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, to name a few. These projects have yielded much success. Our social cohesion project in Northeast Nigeria has supported the reintegration, of women and girls associated with Boko Haram, back into their families and communities, and addressed the stigma and negative perceptions that they face. Our work in Afghanistan created an enabling environment to promote women’s participation in decision-making processes and to improve protection at the community level. Our recent project in Tajikistan has helped dramatically to curb the levels of violence against women and girls by empowering at-risk women and girls to provide for themselves economically as well as to seek more effective protection from domestic violence.

The WPS agenda is critical to realizing the rights of women and girls in conflict-affected states. As one of our partner organizations in the DRC remarked; “*Resolution 1325 is our ‘Battleground’ and our main working tool*”.

However, as we look to its 20th anniversary, there is a need to pause and reflect. Has 1325 lived up to the expectations and the promise it once held? Are women meaningfully

engaged in political and social spaces, peacebuilding, and peace processes? Are they involved in decision-making that directly affects their lives and security? Some suggest that this vision is yet to be effectively realized, not least the UN Secretary-General who identified “a stark contrast between rhetoric and reality, where previously agreed commitments have not been matched by action”.

Rhetoric and reality remain estranged – this is unquestionably the conclusion of our forthcoming research with peacebuilding practitioners, who have been working on WPS for over two decades. While our findings emphasized the value of the agenda – particularly that of National Action Plans as normative frameworks for the advancement of women’s rights around the four pillars of the WPS agenda – key challenges persist. In particular, the continuous prevalence of patriarchal gender norms which frequently take the form of various types of ‘pushback’ against women that are involved in advancing women’s rights and their role in violence prevention; the lack of political will from national governments and global governance institutions; insufficient resourcing; as well as a lack of strategic engagement between national governments and local women’s organizations.

These issues must be addressed, nationally and internationally, if we are to achieve the vision and commitments of 1325. Furthermore, they must be addressed through an active partnership between women peacebuilders, governments, and the international community. Rhetoric, as the Secretary-General says, is not enough. Twenty years later, it is more than time for action.

[International Alert](#)

Gemma Kelly

GKelly@international-alert.org

Policy Officer

[links](#)

- [International Alert](#)
- [United Nations, Security Council \(9 October 2019\): Women, Peace and Security, Report of the Secretary General, S/2019/800](#)
- [International Alert’s projects in Nigeria](#)
- [International Alert’s projects in Nigeria](#)
- [International Alert’s project in Tajikistan](#)
- [Afghanistan’s National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325](#)
- [International Alert’s project: Strengthening women’s role in peace in Afghanistan](#)

reports

More equality needed for a deserved celebration



Women's strike, June 2019, Jonas Zürcher / Creative Commons

The NGO-Koordination post-Beijing Schweiz, consisting of around 35 organizations from the entire political and social spectrum, has been working for women's rights since the fourth World Conference on Women in Switzerland. While individual member organizations deal with the topic of peace in the context of conflicts and war, the network in Switzerland focuses on "peace" in a more comprehensive sense. The network particularly concentrates on social peace, which cannot exist if women and young girls do not have the same opportunities as men. Domestic violence is another area to be addressed in the context of peace.

Since Beijing, a great deal has been achieved in these areas: marital rape is now a criminal offense, domestic violence is no longer considered a private matter, abortion has been decriminalized, and an effective fight against human trafficking is being sought through cooperation between key players. However, victim protection and access to rights are still no reality for many victims of trafficking in women.

Switzerland has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child including the optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, the sale of children, and child prostitution and child pornography.

Concerning activities abroad, the Swiss Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders are to be noted positively. However, it is problematic that they are not sufficiently supported abroad.

Concerning, however, are the limited participation and lack of involvement of women in peace processes, insufficient efforts to integrate a gender perspective into strategies to prevent violent extremism and combat terrorism, the negative impact which the trade in small arms and the export of arms and ammunition to conflict areas has on women, as well as the fact that arms manufacturers do not adequately fulfill their obligation under the

Arms Trade Treaty of 2014 to monitor the use of their weapons and violence against women.

For Switzerland to celebrate the various anniversaries without reservations, gender equality would have to be further advanced. Considerable efforts are still needed to eliminate role stereotypes and to make equal opportunities a reality. For this reason, more women in decision-making positions, equal pay, and the reconciliation of work and family life, but also politics, are indispensable. The corona period in particular has shown that there are still serious shortcomings in this area. The composition of the expert panel – and the lack of women in it – is only one example that gives an extremely deep insight!

In this sense, we believe that the anniversary should only be celebrated in the awareness that we must finally ensure that the path to equality is now rapidly taken.

[Koordination post-Beijing Switzerland](#)

Vivian Fankhauser-Feitknecht

President

[links](#)

[- NGO-Koordination post Beijing Schweiz](#)

reports

New ways of thinking marriage



A life without violence – a pipe dream for many Indian wives. SWISSAID is using targeted campaigns to raise awareness among young people in the Marathwada region so that the dream can finally become reality for as many girls and women as possible.

“Indian girls should be married early in order to avoid sexual disorder.” According to a study, this is the opinion of 67 percent of Indian men in Marathwada in Central India. And 42 percent believe that a husband is, under certain circumstances, justified in using violence against his wife and that she should put up with it for the good of the family. In India, domestic violence is the order of the day. The victims receive little or no help from their families, communities or the government. This is why SWISSAID, together with local partner organizations, is supporting women in building a life free of violence. We are also introducing preventive measures to sensitize women and men to the issue. Sneha Giridhari of SWISSAID India has already been involved in some of these. It is particularly important to work with young women and men, she says.

Peers as role models

But what is the best way to reach young people? In the Marathwada region, one of the things SWISSAID is trying is appointing so-called “peer Educators” from existing groups of boys and girls in over 100 villages. Some motivated and socially competent young people from each group are trained in gender issues. Afterward, they make themselves available as a person of trust to answer questions and problems. At the monthly youth group meetings, they propose different matters for discussion. For example: what is manly? What is womanly? What does violence mean for the victim? And for the perpetrator? What are the consequences of child marriage for those affected? Songs, discussions, posters, and role-plays are used to explore the topics in a playful way.

“This is the breeding ground in which new ways of thinking can grow”

Besides the monthly meetings, people can also seek advice in one-to-one or couple discussions. Young couples can attend courses to learn how to avoid violence. Sneha Giridhari from SWISSAID India is convinced: “This kind of sensitization can raise awareness of these issues. And this is the breeding ground in which new ways of thinking can grow.” New ways of thinkings, for example, in which there is no room for child marriage. For as studies show, child marriage and domestic violence are closely related: the younger the women are, the more often they become victims of domestic violence. Those young women are more vulnerable towards domestic violence mainly because of less education and exposure.

The goal is change

We need to start with the young – and stop with the old. SWISSAID supports measures that will ideally initiate change right across society. Public initiatives such as rallies, video clips or poster campaigns are intended to spread messages on gender equality as widely as possible.

[Swissaid](#)

Maria Künzli

m.roth@swissaid.ch

reports

More justice, less violence related to gender



Mural in Amman, Jordan by Akut, 2016 / Creative Commons

Although 25 years have passed since the World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, violence against women worldwide is still at alarming levels. Even in Switzerland, violence inflicted on people due to their gender – or the gender that has been assigned to them – is still commonplace and has become part of their normal experience. This is even though efforts by the Swiss government against violence have been stepped up in some areas and progress has been made in raising awareness and eliminating taboos. Yet it is precisely this greater awareness of violence and the associated injustice – along with better knowledge of services available and ways of dealing with violence – that can lead to the actual extent of violence being exposed. Since there are no prevalence studies in Switzerland to date, it has not yet been possible to quantify this extent. However, that is now set to change, as Switzerland has committed to this. After all, in addition to the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Women's Rights Convention, the Istanbul Convention has been in force in

Switzerland since 2018. With this convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Switzerland has undertaken to implement comprehensive and very specific measures against violence. The convention is also an instrument for ensuring the equality of all genders since a world without violence cannot exist if there is no gender equality. Therefore, gender equality work always includes the prevention of violence. In addition to state recognition and a practical commitment to this intrinsically feminist analysis, the convention offers two more huge areas of potential: its holistic approach and its commitment to inclusive and non-discriminatory implementation.

The holistic approach requires comprehensive measures ranging from prevention – e.g. in the form of anti-sexist work against gender stereotypes – to counseling, support, protection, law enforcement, and coordinated response. In particular, this strengthens the work being done on addressing the root causes of violence, i.e. prevention, and is intended to avoid a unilateral approach such as relying solely on the prosecution. The intersectional perspective in turn increases awareness of the different realities and needs of those affected by violence, and the fact that the measures and services offered need to be correspondingly diverse and victim-focused. For example, prevention campaigns also need to cover LGBTIQ+ perspectives, refugees need to have equal access to specialized support, and women's shelters need funding to ensure they are accessible to people with disabilities too. The regular prevalence studies mentioned above also need to include specific and precise data on issues such as sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, and residence status to comply with the Istanbul Convention. This inclusive and non-discriminatory implementation is probably the biggest challenge – at the same time, however, the key question is this: how seriously is Switzerland taking the fight against violence? Only when all those affected by violence are protected and supported, and gender equality is guaranteed, can a just and peaceful society be achieved.

[Netzwerk Istanbul Konvention](#)

Simone Egger
Coordinator

[links](#)

- [Netzwerk Istanbul Konvention](#)

reports

The police came by day and the militia by night



Solidarity group of Fastenopfer's partner organization DESECE, 2019 / Fastenopfer

The conflict in western Kenya 15 years ago attracted very little international attention, but the civilian population, and especially women such as Mercy, are still suffering from its consequences to this day. The Fastenopfer (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund) program in Kenya operates in this region, supporting a number of partner organizations and empowering women.

The story of Mercy Chebet* is just one of many. Lots of women in the Development Education Services for Community Empowerment (DESECE) organization could tell of similarly tragic experiences.

Mercy lives in Kenya and belongs to the Sabaot ethnic group: *“I am 47 years old and my name is Mercy Chebet. I live in western Kenya with my eight children. I am a widow.”* Her predecessors were dispossessed by the British colonial government in the 1920s and 30s so that the fertile agricultural land could be given to white farmers. The Sabaot were resettled in the foothills of Mount Elgon, where they came up against other ethnic groups living in higher regions. When Kenya became independent, a wildlife reserve was established in the region, without the involvement of local communities. The availability of land, already in short supply, became even more restricted. Because the Sabaot felt that they had been disadvantaged by the government when their land was repeatedly redistributed and they were forced to resettle, they founded the *Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF)*, an ethnic militia.

In 2005, the conflict flared up out of control and the civilian population – including Mercy’s family – was caught between the fronts. The militia came to her village in the night, demanding food, drink, money, and fighters – that is to say, young men, people’s sons. By day, the police and the army came, seeking information about the SLDF. Both parties in the conflict punished the local population if they did not get what they wanted. This is how Mercy describes that difficult time: *“During the clashes in 2005 that continued to afflict the Mount Elgon area for about three years, many people in the Sabaot militia (SLDF) were driven out or killed. A few put up some resistance and defended themselves. My husband was one of those; he was killed in 2007. Our land and our animals were stolen from us and our house was burnt down. When the conflict spread over the whole Mount Elgon region, I took my children and fled. That’s when my life changed completely.”*

The open conflict continued from 2005 until the SLDF was defeated in 2008. Throughout the whole conflict, the government seemed to be mainly concerned with its own interests. According to human rights organizations, in just one operation conducted by the Kenyan army – “Operation Okoa Maisha” (which euphemistically translates as ‘Operation Lifesaver’) – up to 1,000 people were tortured. However, even after the conflict was resolved, the lives of the survivors were hard, says Mercy: *“When the Kenyan army carried out ‘Operation Okoa Maisha’, the Sabaot militia was defeated and forced to flee into the woods. I myself went back home, but I had to start a new life. I had lost my husband and everything else as well. In order to survive and feed my children, I took on occasional work, called “Kibarua” (Swahili for “casual paid work/day laboring”). The church helped me with food and clothing, but it was not enough. My life went in a different direction, and I miss my previous life.”*

Like many women in this region, Mercy lost her husband because of the conflict. Today, the widows in western Kenya still find themselves in very difficult circumstances: often they are obliged by their dead husband’s family to marry again, and they suffer mental and physical consequences such as violence at the hands of their new family, or sexual attacks. They have no claim to land or any other part of their husband’s legacy. Even though the Kenyan constitution does give them those rights, traditional values prevent them from being implemented at the local level. It is no surprise that many women like Mercy talk about having performed “necessary work” to get by. By this, they may well mean selling their body.

This is why it is all the more important for Fastenopfer to put the empowerment of women front and center in its projects. Especially in conflict regions like the one described here, establishing stable group structures and strengthening forgotten values such as solidarity and trust are essential for carrying out grassroots work. The 15 solidarity groups that are active in 2020 – 75% of whose members are women – are setting up community projects on the land and are being trained in eco-friendly farming methods, so that, even though resources are limited, agriculture can offer them a future again. At the same time, the project is also engaged in peace work, because conflict over resources can – as Mercy’s story powerfully shows – very quickly destroy everything again.

**Name changed*

[Fastenopfer](#)

Romana Büchel

buechel@fastenopfer.ch

Ethnologist and expert on Gender and Religion & Culture

[links](#)

reports

The body at the center of politics



Self-care with herbal medicine, a common praxis between Mapuche in Chile, Heiner Heine, 2009 / Mission 21

Feminism puts bodies at the center of politics, demanding that their diverse needs are being respected; as having rights and demanding that states guarantee those rights.

In my personal experience, arriving at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 reflected a long road of my work with the women's and feminist movement during the dictatorship in Chile. The systematic denunciation of human rights abuses and the construction of creative forms of resistance, which demanded democracy, had generated a solid network of people and organizations that still exists today. The Platform for Action achieved in Beijing encouraged states and civil society institutions to mainstream the gender perspective in public policies, university curricula, political participation in decision-making bodies, and discriminatory regulations and laws.

If in the '80s the Chilean civil society resisted the dictatorship, in the 90's it fought to maintain its autonomy. It faced a government in transition to democracy, which was tied to a political constitution made to serve neoliberalism. The control of the bodies of women, youth, and diversity, as well as the criminalization of indigenous people and the devastation

of the environment, reactivated social movements in new scenarios and articulations.

In this context, partner organizations of Mission 21 work in community networks, in sectors where state programs are deficient and the market has no interest in reaching. This is the case of the Service for Development and Community Education (SEDEC) of the Methodist Church in Chile. In the context of COVID-19, it has achieved a significant presence through virtual programs, generating spaces for self-care and emotional contention, which integrate the wisdom of Mapuche herbal medicine.

The Mapuche, the biggest ethnic group in Chile, are facing massive discrimination since the beginning of Spanish colonization. They are Mapu (earth) che (people) – and the body is at the center of their politics, as they see their land as part of their people's body. The machi (spiritual advisor) Celestino Córdova entered a 100 days of hunger strike as a pressure to the government of Chile to comply with the ILO Convention 169, which protects all political prisoners (Mapuche and those related to their cause) who are deprived of their freedom in different prisons of Chile.

This struggle around the body is taken up by the alternative civil society document "*Luces y Sombras. Twenty-five years after the Beijing Platform for Action*". It denounces "the regression in the exercise of women's rights, promoted by anti-rights movements that claim the use of violence and repression, justifying the persecution and criminalization of human rights defenders by privileging the exploitation of natural resources and by not respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and communities."

At the same time, civil society organizations, including Mission 21, under the lead of PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG), the Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding (KOFF), and cfd (The feminist Peace Organisation), provide the document *Women, Peace and Security and the Prevention of Violence: Reflections from Civil Society in the Context of the Fourth National Action Plan of Resolution 1325*. It recommends the Swiss government to promote community-led definitions of security, particularly as defined by women, marginalized groups and others discriminated against, and to prioritize community security over state security or the protection of transnational industries.

Guaranteeing the right to live a life free from structural and gender-based violence remains a pending issue for all discriminated people. The civil society, and Mission 21 as a part of it, has a fundamental role in demanding governments that all bodies should be at the center of their politics.

The feminist movement in Chile today stands up to support the indigenous movement to exercise their human rights so that a dignified life becomes customary.

Mission 21

Josefina Hurtado

Josefina.Hurtado@mission-21.org

Head of Women and Gender Unit

links

- [Mission 21](#)
- [Mapuche herbal medicine](#)

reports

A time for celebration, reflection and perseverance

In a statement marking the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Conference, the Bahá’í International Community, the international NGO representing Bahá’ís at the United Nations and other international and regional spaces, wrote:

“At the outset, we wish to state clearly our belief that the equality of men and women is a facet of human reality and not just a condition to be achieved for the common good. That which makes human beings human—their inherent dignity and nobility—is neither male nor female. The search for meaning, for purpose, for the community; the capacity to love, to create, to persevere, has no gender. Such an assertion has profound implications for the organization of every aspect of human society.”

Today, the principle and the need for gender equality is something that few deny – all deserve equal remuneration for the same job; all must be able to vote and thus to contribute to the political life of a country; all must have access to education. However, is this enough? The concept of equality, at the heart of so many discussions and action, is one which deserves some reflection. What do we mean and understand by equality? How does this understanding translate into reality? Some elements can help contribute to this discussion.

Equality can be owned, promoted, and contributed to by all, whether individuals, institutions, and structures of society or the collectivity and communities at the local, regional, and national levels. A good reason for celebrating is that so many have made the cause of gender equality their own. The examples demonstrating this are numerous: the feminist strike of June 2019 in Switzerland, the preceding and following actions; the efforts to ensure that being with children in the early days of their lives is something that both parents can do without having to take leave; the work at the grassroots by authorities and civil society to support families; the engagement of institutions of higher learning to encourage young women to study in any field of their choice; the list continues.

The Bahá’í community is contributing to making this principle a reality in Switzerland: it invites the participation of all in building strong and vibrant communities; it engages in spaces where gender issues are discussed, and sees how to advance this conversation; the composition of the Bahá’í institutions in Switzerland shows that equality is a given, with historical equal representation of women and men. At the international level, realizing the equality of women and men is a focus area of the Bahá’í International Community. A series

of articles have explored how Bahá'í communities have begun to implement the gender equality provisions of the Beijing Declaration in neighborhoods and villages around the world.

2020 is not only a time for celebration, but also for evaluating our collective actions, studying the current reality, and planning for what still lies ahead of us. The Swiss Bahá'í community looks forward to pursuing its engagement for greater gender equality and seeking further collaborative ways to build on the results achieved so far.

[Bahá'í Switzerland](#)

Sarah Vader

oea@bahai.ch

External Affairs Representative of the Bahá'í Community of Switzerland

links

- [Bahá'í Switzerland](#)
- [Baha'i International Community's Statement to the 59th Commission on the Status of Women and on the 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women](#)
- [Glimpses into the Spirit of Gender Equality: Mwinilunga, Zambia](#)
- [Glimpses into the Spirit of Gender Equality: Kejau, Malaysia](#)
- [Glimpses into the Spirit of Gender Equality: Riohacha, Colombia](#)

in depth

Foundations for Gender Inclusive Peacebuilding

Image not found or type unknown



Mansoa, Oio Region, Guinea Bissau, Voz di Paz, February 2019 / Interpeace

Through years of programming experience in post-conflict contexts, Interpeace has learned first-hand that inclusion, particularly of marginalized and historically excluded groups, is fundamental for the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. Gender, as seen through an intersectional lens, is arguably one of the most profound sources of exclusion across cultures and contexts globally. Gender inclusive peacebuilding programming can both render peacebuilding efforts more sustainable and create opportunities for the transformation of norms and practices that perpetuate inequality based on gender and other identities.

There are many reasons as to why gender matters in peacebuilding. First and foremost, conflict dynamics are inherently gendered, which concerns both men and women and the intersectionality of their identities. Further, gender influences vulnerabilities that

individuals face before, during, and after violent conflicts. As a result, gender influences the capacities of resilience exercised by individuals and groups in the face of the conflict. Moreover, gender norms have an impact on the way individuals and groups participate in and shape peace processes. Good gender-inclusive programming starts with gendered conflict analysis. For gender inclusive processes to positively contribute to peacebuilding efforts, they must go beyond representation and include opportunities and strategies for influencing. Inclusivity is more than equality of participation; it is also about greater equality of outcomes. Thus, advancing gender inclusivity and peacebuilding requires multisectoral partnerships.

Gender inclusive peacebuilding programming comes with several challenges that practitioners must balance to ensure that their programming is effective and does no harm. Interpeace has identified some of the key aspects needed to leverage gender inclusion for sustainable peacebuilding, which is integral for long-term transformation towards peace.

For this reason, Interpeace has recently published “Ten Foundations for Gender Inclusive Peacebuilding Practice” that is a result of a reflection process that we undertook between 2017-2019 to examine the implementation of gender programming. It provides guidance on what practitioners should do to navigate challenges presented by gender inclusive peacebuilding programming, to better understand gendered dynamics of conflict and to develop effective strategies to leverage gender inclusion for more effective peacebuilding programming and, ultimately, advance gender equality.

The application of the Ten Foundations requires institutional commitment, the development, revision and enhancement of tools, practices and processes, and a continuous process of assessment, learning and innovation to ensure that peacebuilding programming is more effective, sustainable and gender inclusive. For Interpeace, this is fundamental for the pursuit of the institution’s change framework and the application of its principles and approaches.

Abiosseh Davis
munafa@interpeace.org

[links](#)

- [Interpeace](#)

news

Reimagining Victory

digital series



IWM INSTITUTE

REIMAGINING VICTORY



Reimagining Victory is a digital series, developed by Conciliation Resources in partnership with the IWM Institute. In the series, leading journalists, peacebuilders, artists, and academics discuss the concept of victory and look at some of the most pressing issues surrounding conflict and peacebuilding in today's world. As we mark 75 years since the end of the second world war, what does it really mean to 'win' a war today?

Speakers include former President of Colombia and Nobel Peace Prize winner Juan Manuel Santos; UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths; former chairperson of the peace panel of the Government of the Philippines Miriam Coronel-Ferrer; founder and CEO of International Civil Society Action Network Sanam Naraghi Anderlini; negotiator of the Good Friday Agreement Jonathan Powell; and Conciliation Resources' Jonathan Cohen and Dr. Rachel Clogg.

links

- [Explore the Reimagining Victory digital series](#)

news

Masculinities, Marginalization, Militarism (virtual

course, 6 half-days)



Army Special Forces Soldiers speak with a village elder in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan, May 23, 2011 / Creative Commons

Last chance to apply for the new virtual course Masculinities, Marginalization, Militarism (6 half-days), offered by [swisspeace](#) in cooperation with the University of Basel.

- Learn to understand multiple masculinities as an integral part of gender theory;
- Examine the connections between masculinities, marginalization and militarism;
- Learn about concrete approaches to transform harmful masculinities and their impact from experienced practitioners;
- Reflect on how these concepts, mechanisms and approaches relate to your own context;
- Exchange experiences and become part of a community of practice.

[links](#)

- [Apply now!](#)

news

CAS Civilian

Peacebuilding Essentials



Ukraine, 2018 / swisspeace

Are you interested in following a postgraduate program providing a holistic understanding of civilian peacebuilding?

Civilian peacebuilding plays a crucial role in efforts to transform violent conflict, promote peace, rebuild war-torn societies and prevent the recurrence of violence. The Certificate of Advanced Studies Civilian Peacebuilding Essentials analyzes theories, concepts, debates, policies, and practices in the different fields of peacebuilding ranging from peace mediation, conflict transformation, the role of gender to dealing with the past. Additionally, you acquire skills and tools to apply in conflict situations.

Date: November 2020 – August 2021

Application deadline: 30 September 2020

[links](#)

- [Apply now!](#)

calendar

Events

KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE

Upcoming events organized by KOFF member organizations can be found on our [KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE](#).

Think gender and climate justice together!
25 years after the World Conference on Women in Beijing

cfed, KOFF, Sexual Health Switzerland, the NGO Koordination post Beijing Schweiz, Plattform Agenda 2030, and PeaceWomen Across the Globe invite you to participate in an inspiring panel discussion on the need to address both gender and climate justice and their interdependence.

Panel Discussion, 2020/09/17, 6.30 pm – 8pm, Rotonda, Saal der Pfarrei Dreifaltigkeit, Sulgeneckstrasse 13, Bern

[Download the flyer](#)

Dieses PDF wurde automatisch generiert.
Lesen sie à propos: www.swisspeace.ch/apropos

Herausgeber	KOFF von swisspeace
Kontakt	Sonnenbergstrasse 17, Postfach, CH-3001 Bern, Tel.: +41 (0)31 330 12 12
Redaktion	Sanjally Jobarteh, Maria Vogelbacher, Natalina Haller
Übersetzung	Übersetzergruppe Zürich, Furrer Übersetzungen
Bildmaterial	Wandbild von Anthony Geary (Chicago). Creative Commons

KOFF

Die Schweizer Plattform für Friedensförderung
La plateforme suisse de promotion de la paix
La piattaforma svizzera per la promozione della pace
The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

KOFF ist ein Projekt der Schweizerischen Friedensstiftung swisspeace. Es wird gemeinsam getragen vom Eidgenössischen Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten und den folgenden Schweizer Nicht-regierungsorganisationen:

ae-centre	HELVETAS Swiss Int.	SOS Kinderdorf
Alliance Sud	IAMANEH Schweiz	
APRED	IFOR-Schweiz	Swiss Academy for Development
artasfoundation	Interpeace	SWISSAID
BAHA'I	Luzerner Initiative für Frieden und Sicherheit (LIPS)	Terre des Femmes Schweiz terre des hommes schweiz
Brücke · Le pont Caux - Initiativen der Veränderung	medico international schweiz	
cfid	mission 21	
Coexistances	miva Schweiz - transportiert Hilfe	
DCAF		
Eirene Schweiz	Peace Watch Switzerland	
Fondation Hironnelle	Peace Brigades International	
FriedensFrauen Weltweit	Peace Nexus Foundation	
Frauen für den Frieden Schweiz	Quaker United Nations Office	
Graines de Paix	Schweizerischer Friedensrat	
Green Cross Schweiz	Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz	
GSoA	SCI Schweiz	
HEKS	Solidar Suisse	