

à propos

The KOFF
Peacebuilding
Magazine



Preventing Violence and Peacebuilding

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editorial

What types of violence are peace and policy makers confronted with in conflict settings?
How can they peacefully respond to and prevent them?

Many past events show that security force responses are often neither effective nor appropriate. In this issue of à propos, KOFF member organizations provide us insight into cultures of peace and nonviolence. Some focus on social cohesion and inclusion, some advocate for the protection of human rights or the advancement of peace education, and others protect those who advocate.

Wishing you a pleasant read.

Sanjally Jobarteh, Editor of KOFF magazine

By publishing the à propos magazine, the Swiss platform for peacebuilding KOFF creates a medium for its members and partners to communicate about their experiences and perspectives. The articles of this magazine reflect the views of the authors only and not those of KOFF or swisspeace.

focus

Two facets of the Swiss approach to violence prevention



Refugee camp in Syria. SDC

Violence – the tip of the iceberg of fragility

From the perspective of the Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

If violence is considered to be the tip of the iceberg of fragility, preventing violence means addressing the fragility issues of the whole iceberg: issues such as the lack of social cohesion and perspectives, lack of accountability of the State and its institutions, high-levels of corruption, exclusion and perceived injustice can all trigger violence. Violence includes domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence, criminal and gang violence, and politically or ideologically motivated violence. The same fragility issues can lead to extremist violence. In the last years, the topic of prevention of violent extremism has gained the attention of international actors and decision-makers and induced important policy discussions and operational developments to shape prevention approaches. Simultaneously, it has also put the topic of violence prevention at large more firmly on the agenda of international cooperation.

Fragility, conflicts, and violence are crucial challenges that threaten to slow down or reverse development achievements. Conflict and violence adversely affect millions' lives and drive most of the humanitarian needs worldwide: individuals are displaced, livelihoods are devastated, and opportunities for broader growth, development, and prosperity are

destroyed. Addressing challenges in these fragile settings is a strategic priority for SDC. Increasing Switzerland's involvement in fragile and conflict-affected regions calls for long-term engagement combined with a flexible approach, alongside a thorough understanding of fragility in all its dimensions and complexity.

Conflict and violence prevention and transformation approaches aim at preventing and transforming social and political conflicts through peaceful means. Fostering peaceful, just, and inclusive societies (Agenda 2030, SDG 16+) is one way of doing so. Preventing and transforming conflicts and violence involves more than merely ensuring that crises do not happen in the first place. It also means tackling the root causes of tensions and conflicts to make a step 'out of fragility' and prevent the recurrence of violence. Supporting a strong society that embodies democratic values and reinforces good governance is an essential ingredient to conflict and violence transformation.

The aim is to break recurring cycles of violence by addressing the root causes of the conflicts and taking state-building factors into account to achieve good governance, the rule of law, the protection of the citizens, and the respect of human rights, and thus promote constructive conflict and violence prevention and transformation. Theories of change in fragile and conflict-affected regions must be explicitly linked to a context, conflict, and political economy analysis, to ensure that our interventions are tuned to the drivers of fragility, conflict, and violence.

Violent extremism in fragile contexts cannot be clearly distinguished from other forms of violence. The lack of an agreed international definition, its political – and thus sensitive – nature, nationally and internationally, and the multiplicity of actors involved are all elements that add to its complexity. SDC, when addressing violent extremism, does it as both a cause and effect of fragility, with a broader understanding of conflict dynamics, human rights implications, and potential risks.

Put to the test – violent extremism and how to deal with it

From the perspective of the Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD)

Governments have always tended to respond to the violence of an armed uprising with violence in return. To put out the fire as quickly as possible, they immediately send in the fire brigade (i.e., the armed forces).

The scenarios are always the same: population groups that are discriminated against or politically or economically overlooked (especially away from the big cities), a build-up of dissatisfaction, other groups which want to overturn the established order and exploit the tensions for their own ends, violence, repression – it's an endless spiral of violence.

At least, that is how the world dealt with violent extremism until the middle of the last decade when the UN Secretary-General spoke out emphatically against it: we should address the underlying causes (rather than the effects) of violence and seek to engage directly with the population groups involved. Governments, armies, politicians, intellectuals, the media, the whole of society – they are all responsible for this violence, he

said. That is why they should act together to counter the threat of extremism, not only by trying to silence those who propagate violence but also by eliminating the inequalities on which the violence feeds. Together? Therein lie both the problem and the solution.

Switzerland was one of the first countries to respond to this call. In 2016 it launched a program to prevent violent extremism in Africa and the Middle East. Since then, it has been arguing steadfastly for an integrated policy and security approach that considers the people the top priority (so-called “human security”). The number of meetings between local, national, and international leaders has increased to about 50. Switzerland has brought members of the armed forces, ministers, young people, journalists, and high-ranking officials to sit around the same table in about 30 different countries. Over 2,000 people are taking part in these attempts at dialog – frequently to their own surprise.

Because that’s what it is all about, having a dialog. In line with the typically Swiss conviction that there is always a solution to be found, so long as you listen to each other and talk to one another, the FDFA (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) approached the various groups affected by extreme violence and organized cross-border, intergenerational meetings in different cultural and geographical contexts and from different perspectives. In every case, it was a question of raising questions and opening the eyes of those who could see no other way forward except the old, familiar ways.

But what became of this new awareness after everyone had gone home again? How did the participants actually make this culture of interaction and mutual acceptance – which is the path to peace – a reality in their policies and decision-making because that, after all, was the aim of the program? To find out, the FDFA (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) recently conducted a survey, the results of which are due to be published shortly.

[Federal Department of Foreign Affairs \(FDFA\)](#)

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[links](#)

- [The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation \(SDC\), FDFA](#)
- [Peace and Human Rights Division \(PHRD\), FDFA](#)
- [Preventing violent extremism](#)

reports

Preventing online gender-based violence in Palestine



Video "Rana's Story" (www.besafe.ps)

In the current global health crisis, many people worldwide spend more time online than ever. Lockdowns, quarantine, and self-isolation policies have increased internet usage by up to 70%. While there have been numerous reports about increased domestic violence as an effect linked to the pandemic, the rise of gender-based violence in digital spaces remained somewhat obscured. However, online GBV has already been prevalent before the pandemic. It is increasingly recognized as taking place in the wider context of systemic gender-based discrimination and as being rooted in structural inequalities and power imbalances.

Worldwide, there are growing concerns about human rights violations linked to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as in relation to artificial intelligence, right to privacy, freedom of expression, non-discrimination or hate speech. This is no different in Palestine and Israel. “Many Palestinians are facing increasing limitations and violations to their human rights online,” writes 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. The NGO, which advocates for Palestinian digital rights, observed an increase in racism and incitement on social media against Palestinians in 2020. A recent study also shows the magnitude of online gender-based violence in Palestine and Israel.

PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG) repeatedly observed increases of human rights violations in the digital realm and specifically online gender-based violence in its network. PWAG is committed to advancing women’s participation – and online spaces are very much part of the spaces where safe participation and access must be ensured. In the Palestinian context, with its fragmented and restricted physical spaces, it is particularly crucial to safeguard online spaces for activism and make them safe for women.

Together with the Palestinian NGO TAM – Women and media development, PWAG intends to contribute to a decrease in online GBV. TAM began to engage in the prevention of online GBV a few years ago. Starting with a baseline study, they developed several projects addressing the needs of women in relation to online GBV, for instance through an information website and a helpline.

In our joint project “To be safe”, TAM tackles the causes of online GBV through capacity building and sensitization workshops. Teachers and social workers in Palestinian schools in the Bethlehem and Hebron areas learn how to support those who have experienced online GBV and how to address the issue with their students. They then teach the students the necessary skills to enhance their digital privacy and security. The project also includes the possibility for students to plan and implement initiatives themselves to further raise awareness among their peers.

De-normalising online GBV and teaching students to protect their privacy online and to deal with potential violence ultimately contribute to the prevention of online GBV. This is our aim: to ensure the internet is a safe space for women and people of all genders and sexualities.

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

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Program & Advocacy

links

- [PeaceWomen Accross the Globe \(PWAG\)](#)
- [TAM](#)
- [UN Women \(2020\): Online and ICT* facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19](#)

- [7amleh \(2020\): Know Your Digital Rights: Towards a Safe, Fair & Free Palestinian Digital Space.](#)
- [Kvinna till Kvinna & 7amleh \(2018\): A Violent Network: Gender-Based Violence Against Palestinian Women in Virtual Space](#)

reports

Police brutality in Brazil



Black Lives Matter, June 2020, Cipo

After the violent death of George Floyd last year, hundreds of thousands took to the streets, and Black Lives Matter movements worldwide gained momentum. Also, in Brazil's poor neighborhoods, such police brutality is commonplace. But resistance among the population is growing. Grassroots movements are taking up the fight against structural violence and racism.

In 2019, Brazilian security forces killed 6,357 people. The number of fatal victims of police violence increased for the sixth consecutive year. The rate of police-involved killings in Brazil is about four times higher than in the U.S, according to a UNDOC rating. President Jair Bolsonaro's inflammatory speeches justify this excessive use of force by security forces. Most victims of police violence are black, male, and poor. More than half (55%) of them are aged between 15 and 25 years.

One of the reasons for the state-induced or at least tolerated killings of civilians is the social acceptance of violence, which is rooted in the legacy of slavery. To this day, the history of systematic discrimination and exploitation has not been addressed and casts its shadow on today's social structures. Structural racism persists in unequal social structures. Criminal justice practices and police brutality perpetuate social exclusion mechanisms.

Instead of addressing the root causes of this violence, the Bolsonaro administration relies on “heavy-handed” policies. According to the prevailing security policy discourse, drug traffickers and criminals can only be dealt with by the most violent means possible. Consequently, cases of police violence are often not investigated. The use of lethal force is often presented as the unavoidable price of security. Acting on government’s orders, police officers wage a “war on drugs and criminals” armed with heavy weaponry, often taking the law into their own hands and, in some cases, even becoming directly involved in criminal activities. During their operations in the favelas, they frequently endanger uninvolved bystanders, mainly children, and young people. In Rio de Janeiro alone, 62 children were hit by ricochets during shootings in 2020, 26 of whom succumbed to their injuries.

Against impunity

The fatal consequences of these repressive and militarized security policies are documented by terre des hommes schweiz’s project partners in the favelas of Salvador and Recife, where grassroots organizations address the structural causes of violence with social programs for young people. They challenge the impunity of violent crimes committed by the police. The youth groups of the partner organization CIPÓ analyze the structural causes of violence and jointly develop non-violent approaches to fight stigmatization in their everyday lives.

With their persistent public protests against impunity in cases of arbitrary and unlawful assaults by the police, young people from CIPÓ have achieved partial success. The young activists were heard in the Bahia State Parliament and were able to call for an inquiry into cases of police brutality.

Where do the weapons come from?

To find out to what extent police forces that have been proven to commit serious human rights violations are equipped with Swiss weapons, terre des hommes schweiz commissioned a study, together with Terre des Hommes Germany. This in-depth analysis containing several case studies on police brutality will be published in May 2021.

Terre des hommes

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Responsible for managing violence prevention

links

- [Arm trade _ terre des hommes schweiz](#)
- [Statistics on police brutality in Latin America](#)
- [Terre des hommes schweiz's magazine](#)
- [Video on police brutality in Brasil](#)

Conflict transformation in a domestic workers' union



Domestic workers in El Salvador demanding a culture of nonviolence during a March 8 demonstration and also promote it in their union. Brücke · Le pont

El Salvador is among the countries with the world's highest rates of violence and femicide. This also affects domestic workers, who additionally suffer from discrimination in the workplace. In the Simuthres union, around 350 women are fighting for their rights and seeking to establish a culture of non-violence.

Domestic workers in El Salvador are exposed to frequent gender-based violence against women, often live in districts controlled by criminal gangs, and are exploited by their employers. It is against this background that "Brücke · Le pont" is supporting a union for female domestic workers called the *Sindicato de mujeres trabajadoras del hogar remuneradas salvadoreñas* (Simuthres). This joint project aims to improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers. Through training courses and legal and psychological advice, they learn how to demand their employment and human rights. The union also engages in publicity campaigns and sets up alliances to ensure that state institutions recognize domestic workers' rights.

Resolving internal conflicts

For this organization for domestic workers to succeed, it is essential that the union is well-supported internally and presents a unified front to the outside world. Because of the nature of its membership, that is by no means a foregone conclusion: this is a grass-roots organization in which every domestic worker has a personal and complex experience of violence and discrimination. For most of them, working together as a group is something relatively new. Since the union was founded in 2014, the women have been through an impressive collective learning process. They have discovered that they also have to invest time and resources in creating a good internal working environment in addition to their main tasks.

They now run regular workshops on conflict transformation. These focus on strategies for resolving internal conflict and communicating confidently without resorting to violence, as well as on self-care, emotional wellbeing, and interpersonal relationships. The women have also drawn up rules on working together, which encourage mutual respect and consensus-based decision-making. One element of this is that the board members have improved the communication flow between themselves and with their members, while new members of the union are given personal support and are helped to integrate as well as possible.

Stronger in a union, stronger in society

The various areas in which Simuthres takes action are mutually beneficial: thanks to the training courses on gender and employment law, the union members develop an understanding of the structural nature of violence against women and domestic workers and are better able to understand the experiences of their colleagues. Being encouraged to express their opinions in the union helps them to demand their rights in the workplace and defend themselves from being abused.

Precisely because of their experience of violence of all kinds, it is vitally important for domestic workers to see the union as a place that is free from violence. This does not happen overnight but has to be carefully cultivated. Through their commitment, these women are promoting a culture of non-violence on many different levels.

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Communication and Development Policy

[links](#)

- [Brücke · Le pont/Project Abriendo Puertas \(in German\)](#)
- [Brücke · Le pont/ Cultura de paz \(in German\)](#)

reports

Colombia – choosing peace with dignity



Mural Palmichal village - distribution of native seeds, August 24, 2018. Atucsara

Colombia is a country that has been living with violence for decades. Armed conflict is deeply rooted in the country's history, and the violence continues despite the signing of a peace agreement.

Every day there are reports about the murder of popular leaders fighting for their rights, environmentalists protecting nature, ex-combatants trying to re-integrate into society, women because they are women and young people because they express critical opinions. Intimidation, extortion and fear are part of daily life for many people.

Colombia is a society with extremes of wealth and poverty, where about 50% of the population works in the informal economy. The pandemic has further exacerbated the inequalities and shown that the country is still a long way from overcoming poverty. It is a poverty that goes beyond a shortage of food – the people are also poor in freedom of opinion, political involvement and prospects for the future.

Atucsara, a partner organization of Fastenopfer (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund), works with farming communities in the department of Cauca. It takes an integrated, multi-dimensional approach which ranges from improving agricultural production to boosting participation in political life so that communities can put forward their suggestions and take part in debate and decision-making processes. But what would be the point of all that without at the same time working to develop a culture of peace and gender equality? That would be to forget one important aspect, namely the awareness that every single person has a key role to play in establishing peace.

Peace is about the past, and about human relationships and equality between the genders. Peace depends on the interests of individual groups and on the conflicts that are playing out in several different regions. Atucsara contributes to a culture of peace through its work by making people aware that they can change their reality.

Atucsara's projects are about much more than knowledge-sharing. It also supports activities such as setting up savings clubs which help to build up trust and a sense of responsibility between people. Agricultural communities are working together to develop alternatives to growing coca. People are being equipped with the ability to put forward their own suggestions and demands in forums for dialog that bring together different generations to reflect on their relationships and discuss subjects like domestic violence. Major issues such as reconciliation and forgiveness in the context of conflict are also addressed. All this is helping to establish more peaceful coexistence within communities.

“Making peace means teaching the right values, respecting beliefs, trying to find strategies for living together in a healthy, non-violent way. It means knowing how to live together with your neighbors and set a good example. It means being able to understand and relate to other people's suffering.”

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[links](#)

- [Atucsara \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Fastenopfer \(in German/French/Italian\)](#)
- [Building a culture of peace \(in Spanish\)](#)

reports

Mali's radio charter for peace and social cohesion



Signing ceremony of the charter, at the Maison de la presse in Bamako, 13 February 2021. Studio Tamani/Fondation Hironnelle

The Malian media world took advantage of World Radio Day, celebrated on 13 February, to adopt a Charter for Radio and Television Stations in Mali. The document, which was drafted with the support of the Fondation Hironnelle, aims to reinforce the constructive role that the media plays in promoting social cohesion and peace in the context of the crisis affecting the Sahel region.

Media organizations are intermediaries that, when working in a professional and responsible manner, can foster communication and interaction between citizens, policymakers, and all the different groups that make up society. This, therefore, allows for a better understanding and consideration of the needs and capabilities of populations affected by conflict. By creating media spaces for **inclusive dialogue** representing a diverse range of perspectives, local media organizations can highlight real-life experiences and help overcome stigmatizing media portrayals. In so doing, they contribute to reducing the polarizing differences between parts of society that are divided along ethnic, religious, or political lines and function as catalysts for creating a more peaceful public space.

The charter, which was created to assist Malian media organizations in better fulfilling this constructive role while at the same time respecting their ethical and professional obligations, was signed at the Maison de la Presse in Bamako on 13 February 2021. The ceremony was presided over by Mr Fodié Touré, President of the Haute Autorité de la Communication (the *High Communication Authority*, or HAC) with, at his side, Bandiougou Danté, President of the Maison de la Presse and the Union des Radios et Télévisions Libres du Mali (URTEL, the *Malian Union of Free Radio and Television*), and Martin Faye, National Representative of the Fondation Hironnelle.

The charter was inspired by Studio Tamani, the Malian radio program created by Fondation Hironnelle in partnership with URTEL, which has broadcast news and debate programs on a daily basis through a network of 85 radio stations across the country since 2013. The preamble to the charter states that *“to avoid any errors or compromise of ethics that could undermine social cohesion, it is necessary for radio and television organizations in Mali to adopt specific rules of good conduct, which are essential for the accomplishment of their mission, in addition to those to which journalists are generally bound.”* It then sets out 13 articles outlining the commitments of the signatory radio and television organizations. For example, Article 10 regarding the contribution of media actors to peace states: *“Radio and television organizations and the employees thereof shall be aware of their particular responsibilities while broadcasting, and undertake to eschew any errors that may jeopardize social cohesion and national unity in Mali. As educators and mediators, they shall promote a culture of peace and social cohesion in their activities.”*

This Charter is designed to contribute to making radio and television stations a social link between Malians, restoring confidence within society, and being a firewall against extremism, inter-community violence, and the stigmatization of groups. During the signing ceremony, the President of the HAC stressed that *“this charter is a tool that was missing from the panoply of reference sources in the allocation of frequencies and monitoring of radio stations in our country.”*

[Fondation Hironnelle](#)

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Communications and Public Relations

links

- [Fondation Hironnelle](#)
- [Studio Tamani \(in French\)](#)
- [Mali's radio charter](#)
- [Video/ Signing ceremony of the charter at the Maison de la Presse in Bamako](#)

reports

The importance of peace education



Muslim and Christian students studying together in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Richard Wayman/Alamy

What is peace education?

Fundamentally, peace education aims to counter a culture of war by promoting a culture of peace. It challenges the assumption that violence is innate to the human condition and seeks to equip students with the capacity to resolve conflict without violence. Peace education aspires to enable students to become responsible citizens who are open to differences, capable of empathy and solidarity, both within and across borders and social groups, and who can deconstruct the foundations of violence and take action to advance the prospects of peace.

Peace education includes a wide range of approaches. Some focus on promoting individual and interpersonal skills such as emotional awareness, anger management, empathy, cooperation, and kindness. Others focus on the social, cultural, and political aspects of peace, including environmental education, human rights education, development education, cross-cultural studies, and social justice.

Schools as sites of violence

Formal school settings are often sites of violence – including direct, cultural, and structural violence – and there is some doubt that schools provide an enabling environment in which

the aims of peace education can take root. However, formal schools help to shape social and cultural values, norms, and attitudes. Education can support children and young people in building positive relationships and creating safe learning environments where children thrive. Moreover, according to published data and studies, peace education interventions have been proven to result in improved attitudes and cooperation and decreased violence and dropout rates. For example, in Afghanistan, Help the Afghan Children's program saw remarkable reductions in different forms of violence at school and saw improvement in children's attitudes towards violence against women.

Given the importance of schools in the lives of children and young adults and the need for concerted efforts to work within educational environments to develop cultures of peace, there is a strong case for advancing the understanding and practice of peace education in formal schools and to highlight the crucial role schools can play in furthering the aims of peace.

How can peace education be mainstreamed?

International Alert's research suggests to effectively advance peace education in schools, where we must promote healthy relationships and a peaceful school culture; address issues of structural and cultural violence; take account of the way education is delivered and packaged, not just the content of the curriculum; combine peace education approaches that are focused on individual transformation and interpersonal relationships with wider socio-political outcomes; connect efforts to advance a culture of peace within schools to wider community initiatives and policy-making.

Mainstreaming peace education is neither linear nor straightforward. Formal schools cannot be radically changed overnight. But we can aim and find the space to create change in existing systems and where we can do complimentary work.

International Alert

Caroline Brooks
Program Manager

links

- [International Alert](#)
- [Peace education report](#)
- [Peace Perceptions poll](#)

in depth

40 years of nonviolent intervention in conflict zones



Archives of the Dutch Committee of Solidarity with the People of Guatemala. CIRMA

Peace is not just a state or the absence of war but a process. A process that strives toward the rule of law, nonviolence, protection of human rights, social justice, intercultural respect, and tolerance. In 1981, a group of experienced peace activists with the common goal of advancing this process in conflict zones founded “Peace Brigades International” (PBI) in Canada.

With the experience that sustainable social change in conflict-affected contexts must come from the people, PBI’s peacebuilding approach centers on the protective accompaniment of human rights defenders under threat. Here, the concept of an unarmed third party intervening in conflicts is applied, based on Mahatma Gandhi’s idea of a peaceful army. The concept is rooted in the principles of non-interference, non-partisanship, and nonviolence. In addition, creating an inclusive and participatory space for action is also quintessential for this type of conflict management. After all, sustainable peace can only be attained if the dialogue between the conflict actors is facilitated. Based on these principles, PBI only becomes active upon request and only supports civil society actors working non-violently and legally toward a just conflict resolution.

PBI's work is based on integral protective accompaniment, including physical accompaniment, advocacy, and awareness-raising work. Internationally, the organization has established a network of contacts in politics, diplomacy, and civil society. Because for violent attacks to be effectively prevented, they must be made visible. Therefore, international solidarity and responsibility are essential for sustainable change in conflict zones. Other effective methods used to protect human rights defenders include workshops on psychosocial accompaniment and digital security.

Believing that peace is built on inclusion and tolerance, PBI emphasizes flat hierarchies in its organizational structure. All members are considered equal, and decisions are based on consensus at all levels. The partnership with the accompanied organizations is built on mutual trust, which is vital for providing adequate protection. PBI strives to share this horizontal model and nonviolent approach as broadly as possible with other civil society organizations.

Over the past 40 years of nonviolent interventions in conflict zones, PBI has continually adapted to the changing political and social circumstances on the ground. The ultimate goal is to withdraw from an area once international protective accompaniment is no longer needed. To meet the different realities and needs of human rights defenders affected by violence, a constant expansion of the protection model is indispensable. The organization will continue to work on this in the future.

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

My Hang Thai

Fundraising and Project Support Assistant

[links](#)

- [Founding meeting of PBI, 40 years ago](#)

in depth

Towards a paradigm shift



Women Protection Team's community security meeting in Bentiu, South Sudan, 24 February 2021.

Nonviolent Peaceforce

There is growing recognition that many of the existential threats the world is facing are rooted in a mechanistic worldview or paradigm. Martin Luther King called this “our thing-oriented civilization.” It is a story of the separation of humans from nature; humans from each other through divisions of class, religion, race, and gender; and of the Self from our integral, interconnected being. It has led us to extract, exterminate and push species, cultures, and communities to extinction while dividing us as a society and alienating us from our humanity. It separates the powerful from the consequences of their actions (Shiva, 2019). The world needs a different story if it is to survive – a story of interdependence, purpose, and sufficiency; a person- and planet-oriented civilization.

Pioneers across the world are working to bring this new story to life. The shift from retributive justice to restorative justice or from industrial agriculture to agroecology is, in essence, a shift from separation to interdependence. It is time for a similar shift in the field of security that relies so heavily on walls and technology, designed to isolate or eliminate threats and allows the privileged few to enjoy their safety in separation from a dehumanized other.

As the practice of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) can contribute to such a shift, we are working to build up UCP as a recognized field of practice rather than simply a tool kit for

violence reduction used by some groups. UCP presents a new story of security, a story in which security can be found in greater connectivity with the 'enemy other.'

Over the last five years, Nonviolent Peaceforce has been working to establish UCP as a field of practice. We have held workshops in Asia, Latin America, Africa, Middle East, North America, and Europe, bringing together local and international practitioners, academics, and policy-makers to identify the common and good practices of this kind of work, the use of active nonviolence to prevent and manage conflict, protect civilians from physical harm and to contribute to building sustainable peace. As a community of practitioners, we are working to strengthen our collective knowledge and articulation of the impact of the existing work and its potential for scale-up. The capstone event series will take place over the next year, culminating in an international conference on UCP to be held in Geneva in 2022.

As a community, we recognize that to foster substantive change, we need to contribute to triggering a paradigm shift that moves us collectively from a default reliance on armed force approaches to civilian-led, unarmed, nonviolent responses to conflict and insecurity. This is no insignificant challenge as the current system of dominant power works on the use of force to achieve a zero-sum solution paradigm. For a systemic change, we must do more than simply implement projects. We are now working on integrating UCP into the broader field of civilian protection. This requires an integrated approach of policy, advocacy, program implementation, education and research. We strive to move beyond our own organizational work to enable UCP practitioners to develop into an intersectional coalition of nonviolent movements such as planet protection, restorative justice and alternative economics.

The most powerful opportunity we have is to unite these separate stories to be woven together into a roadmap that can guide a global community in meeting its existential threats with courageous compassion.

[Nonviolent Peaceforce](#)

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Executive Director

[links](#)

- [Nonviolent Peaceforce](#)

news

Summer School: Ukraine – Opportunities and Challenges for Dialogue (virtual course, 5 days)



How can peace and conflict studies contribute to understanding conflict dynamics in Ukraine? What are the opportunities for conflict settlement in Ukraine through dialogue at the local, national and international levels? What obstacles do these efforts face?

In this course you will:

- Understand the conflict in and around Ukraine and the current status of the settlement process.
- Analyze key actors, drivers and layers of conflict in the context of Ukraine.
- Assess opportunities and challenges for dialogue in Ukraine at the local, national and international level.
- Learn about key concepts from peace studies and how they apply to Ukraine.
- Exchange experiences and become part of a community of practice.

Date: 21 – 25 June 2021

Application deadline: 30 April 2021

links

- [Learn more and apply](#)

news

Masculinities, Marginalization, Militarism (virtual course, 6 half-days)



From academia to practical programming, gender has often been equated with “biological sex” and has been used as a synonym for women. This undermines the real analytical and emancipatory potential of gender analysis. This course provides a counterweight to this tendency, highlighting the role of masculinities in conflict and peacebuilding.

In this course you will:

- learn to understand multiple masculinities as an integral part of gender theory;
- examine the connections between masculinities, marginalization and militarism as a driving force behind violence in conflict times;
- 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.

Date: 30 June – 09 July 2021

Application deadline: 30 April 2021

links

- [Learn more and apply](#)

calendar

Events

KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE

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

GENDER-WEBINAR: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ITS INTERSECTIONALITIES

PeaceWomen Accross the Globe (PWAG)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an epidemic sweeping across Latin America and the world. In this three-part webinar, activists from PWAG's Latin America network will talk about the intersectionality of race and ethnicity and of gender identity in GBV and about the intersection of femicide and institutional violence.

Date: 10, 17, 24 April 2021

[Learn more](#) and [register](#)

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: 'BOTH FEET ON THE GROUND': INNOVATION AT THE NEXUS OF PEACEBUILDING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), Interpeace, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (DHF)

As part of the FriEnt Peacebuilding Forum 2021, QUNO, Interpeace & DHF will be hosting a round table dialogue to tap into the innovation and creativity of practitioners across the human rights and peacebuilding disciplinary divides to 'shake loose' policy debates that are often stuck and incentivize integrated rather than bifurcated funding strategies. There is much common ground – whether in 'dealing with the past', or from the perspective of YPS or WPS programming & implementation, or in the risks of securitization of peacebuilding – but there are also challenges.

Date: 29 April 2021

[Learn more](#)

ILANZER SOMMER

Forum für Friedenskultur (The Forum for a Culture of Peace) launches the Ilanzer Sommer! From August 8 to 14, 2021, participants will develop ideas, projects and partnerships on the urgent topics of reducing polarization, promoting dialogue, building trust, and discuss what everyone can contribute to an active culture of peace in Switzerland.

Target groups: schools, media, communities.

The program will include workshops and a cultural and encounter program in the beautiful mountains of Graubünden.

Dates: 8 – 14 August 2021

[Learn more and register \(from 14 April 2021\)](#)

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Read à propos: www.swisspeace.ch/apropos

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

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