

No. 171

July 2021

# à propos

The KOFF  
Peacebuilding  
Magazine



## Seizing East Africa's Opportunities for Peace

1

focus

[Mozambique – it can’t work without the younger generation](#)

2

reports

[Studio Sifaka – a radio program giving voice to youth in Madagascar](#)

[South Sudan – cautious signs of progress towards peace](#)

[Addressing and responding to the harm caused by war](#)

[The role of community-based conflict resolution in Kenya](#)

[Kenya – police violence and the fight against impunity](#)

[Peacebuilding and cooking – Calabash in Kenya](#)

[South Sudan – the positive role of religion in peace](#)

3

in depth

[Strengthening security sector governance in Ethiopia](#)

4

news

[The fourth episode of KOFF Ton-Träger is out!](#)

[Register now for a swisspeace continuing education program](#)

[terre des hommes schweiz publishes a study on European arms exports](#)

[swisspeace publishes a new policy brief](#)

5

calendar

[Events](#)

## editorial

With a vast territory covering twenty-one countries and more than 160 different ethnic groups, the East African region is extremely multifaceted and rich in natural and cultural resources. This wealth and diversity are both an asset, marking the potential for peace in this fascinating region and a source of conflict and instability. South Sudan, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Kenya are still affected by violence induced by inter-communal and pastoral conflicts, cross-border rebel insurgency, or violent repression by state security forces. Natural disasters such as droughts and floods, which are expected to increase in frequency, tend to exacerbate these conflicts. Despite deficits and delays in the implementation process, national peace initiatives are underway (e.g., the peace process in southern Sudan or security sector reforms in Ethiopia). At the same time, local organizations and their Swiss-based partners are taking action to prevent violence and create a climate of peace. Through vocational or theological training for young people, radio programs, or gastronomy, they are committed to building on the potential for peace that East Africa has to offer.

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

# Mozambique – it can't work without the younger generation



Chimoio, Mozambique 2020. terre des hommes schweiz supports 6 organizations in Mozambique to offer young people a perspective. They support them through education, training in organic farming and raise awareness about gender-based violence such as early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Jonas Wagner-Mörsdorf / terre des hommes schweiz

Palma is a small town in northern Mozambique with about 75,000 inhabitants. It is only about 25 kilometers from the border with Tanzania, and people make their living from the local fishing industry. So, it is a small town, which we don't expect anyone had ever read about in the international media. On the afternoon of March 24, 2021, however, this supposed tranquility came to an end, and Palma became the sad culmination of what has been going on in northern Mozambique for about 3 years. During the afternoon, an armed group with links to the Islamic State descended on the little town. In the days that followed, they shot and beheaded at least 90 people. The reports, photos, and videos from Palma are terrifying. "We saw a 14-year-old boy going on his first mission. There he was, happy as anything, describing how he had killed people," one woman reports. She is one of 23 women held captive by the rebel groups – also known locally as 'machababos' – and managed to escape. Their testimony gives a profound insight into the group of attackers who have been terrorizing the Cabo Delgado province for three years.

Cabo Delgado is Mozambique's northernmost province, around 1,500 km from the capital Maputo in the far south. For years, the extreme north was of little interest to the Mozambican government. The region has high youth unemployment, 67% of people are unable to read or write, and the lack of prospects makes it easy for Islamist recruiters to attract young people. Public discontent with the government in Maputo has been fueled by the discovery of huge gas deposits off the coast of the region – the largest gas deposits in Africa – while the profits from the supposed boom go mainly to foreign companies such as the French Total Group and the ruling party, Frelimo. As a result, there are no real job opportunities for young people in the area. It is also fairly clear how the government is reacting to the years of attacks in Cabo Delgado – the gas companies are promised protection, and attempts are made to bring the conflict under control with mercenary groups, such as the notorious Russian Wagner Group or, most recently, the South African Dyck Advisory Group. The local population tends to be left out of the deliberations. The ruling party Frelimo sees the civil war in Cabo Delgado as a threat to its 'business model' in relation to the natural gas deals. This also explains why the government labels the attackers as foreign members of the so-called IS, with whom negotiation would be impossible. Independent journalists are expelled, as happened recently with the British journalist Tom Bowker, who was one of the few to report on the situation's complexity and expose the government's failings. In recent years, it has also become difficult for national journalists to report on the situation in Cabo Delgado. Aid organizations are no longer issued visas, and the government has even put delays in the path of the EU observer mission. The idea of foreign aid is attractive, but only in financial form and not through independent observers or foreign troops who might point out the government's failings. Mozambicans are also astonished at how much time it took for President Filipe Nyusi, who was himself born in Cabo Delgado, to comment on the attacks.

The recent brutal attacks in Palma have shown that the current approach offers no solution. From October 2017, when the attacks began, until the end of May 2021, there have been almost 900 assaults, in which 2,852 people have died. Over 714,000 people are now internally displaced persons (IDPs). Since last year, the so-called IS has been claiming

responsibility for the violence, as it did for the attack in Palma. However, the photos and videos produced as evidence were demonstrably older. From the above-mentioned interviews with the women who fled, it is clear that – contrary to what the government claims – most of those responsible were not foreigners but young men from the region. According to the women, the perpetrators are driven less by Islam than by frustration with the government and financial greed. Those interviewed assumed that the only foreigners involved were the leaders of the terrorist militia, who are mostly male and well-educated, mainly from Tanzania. They belong to the originally Somali al-Shabaab militia. The group taps into the anger of the disaffected youth in Cabo Delgado and fuels resentment towards the ‘faithless government in Maputo’ and the ‘thieving’ foreign gas companies.

The lack of prospects and the feeling among the young people in Cabo Delgado that they are forgotten is one of the most important starting points for a lasting solution to the conflict. For Paula Macave, the national coordinator of terre des hommes schweiz in Mozambique, youth unemployment is the most pressing issue. That is why local projects are supporting young people to develop their own economic prospects through organic farming or training. We also provide sexual health education, as early marriages and teenage pregnancies are a big problem, especially in rural Mozambique. There seems to be development in the conflict elsewhere as well: Portugal is to send troops, and the USA and France have also promised support. According to Paula Macave, the pressure exerted by the African Union on the Mozambican government to finally allow external support could make a positive difference. The Catholic Church is also openly addressing the problems that have caused the conflict. It likewise criticizes the government: ‘The Church wants young people to lead a different life than the one they are leading now. That is why we are encouraging people, especially the younger generation, to cultivate their hopes and dreams and work to realize them.’

Therefore, our conclusion is fairly clear: there will only be a long-term peaceful solution if external aid is allowed in, if independent journalists are again able to report on the situation in Cabo Delgado and if the government takes the needs of the people seriously. Furthermore, peace will only be possible if the poorer sections of the population also benefit from the vast resources that are exported and if young people in the country are given real prospects. This is what we work on with our partners every day.

[terre des hommes schweiz](#)

Jonas Wagner-Mörsdorf

Jonas.Wagner@terredeshommes.ch

Fundraising Institutions, Program Coordination

links

- [terre des hommes schweiz](#)
- ["Jihadists seize small town Palma" \(ge\)](#)
- [Characterization and social organization of machababos from the discourses of kidnapped women](#)
- ["Mozambique: Gas investors want to defy Islamist terror" \(ge\)](#)

- [An overview of foreign security involvement in Mozambique](#)
- [Mozambique: Hundreds killed - all parties to conflict commit war crimes](#)
- [Mozambique deports British journalist Tom Bowker](#)
- [Cabo Delgado – EU mission blocked, US demands allegiance, Portugal | By Joseph Hanlon](#)
- [Situation Summary - Cabo Delgado](#)
- [Mozambique News reports & clippings \(April 2021\)](#)
- [Mozambique News reports & clippings \(March 2021\)](#)
- [Mozambique: Catholic Bishops alert president to vulnerability of young people](#)

---

reports

# Studio Sifaka – a radio program to give voice to youth in Madagascar



A young journalist from Studio Sifaka reporting near Andasibe, in eastern Madagascar. Iako M. Randrianarivelo / Fondation Hironnelle

**Created in 2019 by Fondation Hironnelle in partnership with the United Nations, Studio Sifaka is a radio program aimed at young Malagasy to provide access to useful and reliable information and to allow them to make their voices heard peacefully.**

Studio Sifaka has been producing a 2-hour daily radio program since December 2019. It is broadcasted by a network of 24 local radio partners, covering nearly 50% of the total population of Madagascar. Content includes a national and regional newscast as well as

programs dedicated to practical advice (health, employment, etc.), dialogue, music, and Malagasy culture. They are produced by a team of young Malagasy journalists, trained and supported by Fondation Hirondelle. This year, it is planned that Studio Sifaka will become a 100% Malagasy entity, supported by Fondation Hirondelle and UNDP.

In 2020, a survey was conducted to measure the audience for Studio Sifaka's programs and their impact on the population, particularly young people. It was led by the Kantar Institute, a renowned international polling institute. The study indicates that Studio Sifaka's programs are listened to each week by 4.3% of the population covered by all the partner radios and that about 320,400 people aged 15+ regularly listen to them. An encouraging result after less than a year of broadcasting (at the time of the study). The construction of a regular audience indeed takes several years for a new media outlet. And Studio Sifaka is primarily aimed at young people, often neglected by the country's mainstream media.

90% of these regular listeners are between 15 and 34 years old. The intended target audience, young people, is thus clearly reached. *«I realized that some of my friends did not listen to the radio before, but now they are always there, at the same time, to listen to Studio Sifaka's programs»*, said a listener of Studio Sifaka in the rural commune of Vohipeno. *« It's like a meeting place for us, and we get together to listen and comment on what they say on the radio. And sometimes, the discussions go on afterward. There's so much content and new things we learn every day that open our eyes.»*

Another source of satisfaction is that Studio Sifaka's audience is predominantly female, with 57% female listeners compared to 43% male. A result that is all the more remarkable given that most media, and in particular news media, generally have a predominantly male audience, in Africa and elsewhere around the world. *«As a young woman, I now know what harassment and gender-based violence are»*, said a female listener in the city of Sambava, on the northeast coast of the island. *«I know what to do and where to go if I or someone I know is a victim.»*

74% of Studio Sifaka listeners consider its programs "useful" or "indispensable" in their daily lives. The information provided by Sifaka is considered "reliable" by 82% of the listeners, who also believe (78%) that the programs are balanced, impartial, and give voice to different points of view. Listening to Studio Sifaka programs has already led 60% of listeners to change their behavior and 68% to share information with others. *«We hear too often about ethnic discrimination in our country. There are the coastal people, and there are the merina. This kind of discourse often leads to conflicts. But when you listen to the programs of Studio Sifaka, I have the impression that this categorization does not exist. I hear different voices and dialects every time, and it makes for a very harmonious radio experience. It changes our relationship with young people who are not from the region,»* said a listener in Sambava, on the northeast coast of Madagascar.

#### [Fondation hirondelle](#)

Nicolas Boissez

[nicolas.boissez@hirondelle.org](mailto:nicolas.boissez@hirondelle.org)

Communications and Public Relations

#### links

- [Fondation hirondelle](#)
  - [Studio Sifaka](#)
-



# South Sudan – cautious signs of progress towards peace



Dinka Malual and Misseryia men dance to celebrate the successful conduct of the peace conference between the two communities, South Sudan, 2010. Martina Santschi / swisspeace

After decades of civil war against the North, South Sudan celebrated its independence on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 and became the de facto newest country in the world. Ten years later, South Sudan's record is grim, with two civil wars (2013-2015 and 2016-2018) and two peace agreements signed since its independence. There are, however, signs of hope for a more peaceful future.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) is the latest peace agreement currently being implemented. It continues to inch forward despite numerous challenges. The reasons for the delays in its implementation include deep-seated mistrust, regional interventions that did not necessarily help the process, international pressure not always administered adequately, a peace process somewhat imposed on the elites, lack of ownership of the agreement, and the fact that the region itself is in a crisis. The ceasefire between the main warring parties is largely holding, but the country continues to witness unique levels of “intercommunal” violence coupled with natural disasters (floods and droughts). An estimated number of 8.3 million people (South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 (January 2021) – South Sudan | ReliefWeb – 14.06.2021) is thus in need of humanitarian assistance.

The conflict has intertwining layers from the local community level to the regional and international, passing by the national and subnational. Within these layers, there are cross-cutting concerns that influence each other in countless ways. These include delimitation of internal and external borders, the proliferation of weapons and armed actors, economic hardships, competition over natural resources, ethnic-based grievances, and a lack of functioning institutions and accountability mechanisms.

In this environment, three likely scenarios can be outlined. The first being the continued selective and delayed implementation of the R-ARCSS, where only some provisions of the agreement are implemented, albeit at a slower pace than originally foreseen. The second is a violent escalation of the localized conflicts to the national level, which could be triggered by a breakdown of the patronage system and the economy's implosion. The third and most optimistic scenario foresees the implementation of reforms and changes in the political dynamics. An increased pool of young educated and internationally connected South Sudanese, a relatively small but active civil society, women's organizations, and business entrepreneurs are relentlessly pushing for reforms. In addition, influential members of the "older" generation are increasingly critical about how public institutions have been managed and are gradually taking stock of the legacy they will leave behind. Thus, with an alignment of factors, one can envision the implementation of substantial reforms foreseen by the Peace Agreement and the gradual, peaceful development of this beautiful nation!

[Center for Security Studies ETH Zürich](#)

Joane Holliger

joane\_h@hotmail.com

Senior Program Officer, Mediation Support Team

[links](#)

- [Center for Security Studies ETH Zürich](#)

---

reports

# Addressing and responding to the harm caused by war



Maaji II refugee settlement in Adjumani, Northern Uganda, April 2021. Alice Horner.

Following around 20 years of conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government, the militant group has been expelled from the country. However, the crimes that took place continue to impact a portion of the population whose wounds have not yet healed. But Uganda has experienced recent stability since the mid-2000s. This makes it the largest refugee-hosting country in East Africa, with 1.5 million refugees (UNHCR, April 2021). These refugees come mostly from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo and flee from conflict and human rights violations, including killings, torture, and kidnappings.

The Refugee Law Project (RLP) was established in 1999 to provide free legal aid to protect the rights of refugees. However, as legal issues proved to be symptoms of deeper-rooted causes, particularly psychological, physical, and sexual violence during conflicts or while fleeing, RLP expanded its services. The organization also currently supports asylum seekers, refugees, deportees, internally displaced persons, and host communities.

It is often assumed that cases of sexual violence are commonplace in conflict situations, but as of now, no robust data is available. In an environment where sexual violence is unrecognized and taboo, survivors tend not to seek help and, therefore, do not receive appropriate support.

The RLP has developed a systematic approach that makes it possible to understand each client's experience and precisely identify their needs to offer them full support. Using an interactive questionnaire on a tablet (referred to as the screening tool), RLP employees allow victims to share their experiences and suffering resulting from war. Of the 6,500 clients who have participated in screening over the past three years, 80% gave positive feedback, 15% neutral feedback, and 5% negative feedback. The majority of participants stated that this was the first time a humanitarian organization had devoted so much time and attention to them.

Following the screening, RLP employees have enough information to offer the appropriate services. This may include legal or psychological support offered within the organization or referring the client to a hospital with which the organization works. “21 Years Running” is a ten-minute documentary (link below) that illustrates the results of the RLP’s screening. One person recounts the sexual violence she experienced during the conflict in South Sudan and describes the dramatic consequences for her health and daily life.

The systematic approach of the RLP’s screening is essential to reduce the under-reporting of experiences of sexual violence in conflict situations. Screening identifies the needs of survivors of violence and provides them with targeted support, while, at the same time, statistics taken from the data collected make evidence-based advocacy possible. In this sense, responding to and documenting the harm caused by war contributes to peacebuilding.

#### [Eirene Suisse and Refugee Law Project](#)

Alice Horner

[a.alicehorner@gmail.com](mailto:a.alicehorner@gmail.com)

Data analyst

#### links

- [Eirene Suisse](#)
- [Refugee Law Project](#)
- [21 Years Running \(documentary\)](#)

---

reports

# The role of community-based conflict resolution in Kenya



Nyahururu Peace Committee, Kenya, February 2020. Fastenopfer

Cattle rustling has become a lucrative business in the arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya. Amid ethnic clashes, banditry, private land encroachment, and political contestations along ethnic lines, cattle rustling is a symptom of the increasing pressure on natural resources. The number of violent acts has increased over the past few months in Baringo County, Kenya. The region has a hot and dry climate throughout the year, and precipitations do vary. Thus, availability and access to water are a reoccurring issue, particularly in the low-lying regions during the dry season.

The Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu works as one of few organizations in Mochongoi, a location within this area. Given the described conflicts, the diocese carried out conflict analyses with representatives from the different segments of society: traditional elders, women groups, the security sector, county administrations, and religious leaders. They confirmed the known ideas about the reasons for conflict. Additionally, they highlighted the influx of illegal arms from the Northern border. The use of weapons transformed the long-time traditional function of cattle raiding from a means of redistributing wealth within pastoral societies to a commercial-like activity exacerbated by political influences and corruption. The lack of developed infrastructure and tough geographical terrain towards West Pokot County often prevents the police from tracking armed cattle raiders and successfully recovering livestock. Furthermore, the security forces lack proper communication capacities with the public; they are ill-equipped and thus often become targets themselves.

The conflicts heavily affect the local communities. An increased number of internally displaced persons move away from the lower parts of Mochongoi to the upper parts, increasing the need for basic services in the project region. As a result, youth and young adults find themselves with low access to education and lack opportunities, thus creating a downwards spiral in alcohol, idleness, and willingness to participate in violent activities. In the past five years, over ten primary schools have been vandalized and community projects threatened. Whereas men mostly pay with their lives, women and children are increasingly

attacked, as they have to replace the men to graze the livestock. In addition, there is an increase in widow-headed households and women living in informal settlements as they lack the land for gardening to feed their families.

The Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu is working towards breaking the cycle of violence. The Caritas team is strengthening local peace committees by training them in conflict analysis and conflict resolution techniques. The peace committees bring together pastoralist and farming communities, having an interest and a role to play in the conflict of these regions. The peace committee members learn to separate criminal cases from those that they can potentially mediate themselves. They also work closely with other crucial actors such as the police, traditional elders, whose role in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms is essential. Cases of cattle rustling are part of the conflicts that the peace committees try to solve first on their own. However, cattle are often transported over long distances. The peace committees contact other peace committees beyond their own jurisdiction to track the cattle and, in the best case, recover them through a mediated agreement between the two communities' leaders. This is enabled by the numerous trust-building activities that they undertake. In 2020, 8 cases of theft out of a total of 600 head of cattle were reported to the peace committees. All livestock could be recovered.

The coronavirus pandemic continues limiting the meeting possibilities of the peace committees. In addition, the increasing effects of climate change make resource-based conflicts more likely. And the upcoming general elections (presidency and parliament) make it more likely for politicians to use ethnic rivalries to their advantage. Within this context, the importance of the very localized peace committees integrated into a wider network of peace actors becomes evident.

#### [Caritas Nyahururu](#)

James Mugambi

Project Officer

#### [Fastenopfer](#)

Stellamaris Mulaeh

Peace and Conflict Specialist

#### [Fastenopfer](#)

Leon Jander

Program Manager

#### [links](#)

- [Caritas Nyahururu](#)
- [Fastenopfer Kenya](#)

---

reports

# Kenya – police violence

# and the fight against impunity



Activists from the Mathare Neighborhood Social Justice Center (Nairobi), supported by PBI Kenya (2019)

In May 2020, the world was shocked by the death of George Floyd, who died in Minneapolis following a violent police arrest. The words “I can’t breathe” have had a strong impact on public opinion. The case has led society to reflect on police violence and racism. Sadly, this is not an isolated case. Police violence is rife in other countries without receiving the same level of publicity.

One such country is Kenya, where serious human rights violations by security forces have been widely documented. Torture, enforced disappearances, rapes, extrajudicial executions... The authorities regularly resort to excessive use of force while carrying out operations in the name of security. According to the *Missing Voices* annual report, 157 people were killed by the police in Kenya in 2020.

On March 27, 2020, the Kenyan government decided to impose a curfew and other restrictive measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, this has not been without consequences. The police have used excessive and arbitrary force to restrict freedom of expression, and demonstrations and gatherings have been banned. A notable example is the case of 13-year-old Yasin Moyo, who was assassinated on his balcony by a police officer enforcing the curfew.

In the midst of the pandemic and following criticism from various human rights organizations, President Kenyatta apologized for the widespread police violence but did not order the police to end the abuse. Then, in February 2021, an unprecedented case struck the Kenyan justice system: 15 police officers and 6 law enforcement officers were charged

with violent acts committed in March 2020. However, despite the victims' hopes, the charges were dropped.

Fighting against impunity for police violence and facilitating relationships between the police and communities form a specific part of PBI Kenya's support objectives. The violence committed by the police has prompted residents of marginalized neighborhoods to come together, notably through the Social Justice Centres (SJs). In Kenya, PBI and the SJs are working together to fight these abuses through regular dialog with national and international authorities to steer the government to respect human rights. This year marks the 40th anniversary of PBI, so we want to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of and need to combat human rights violations such as police violence and to promote peace.

[Peace Brigades International \(PBI\) Switzerland - Geneva](#)

Ines Alfaro

[ines.alfaro@peacebrigades.ch](mailto:ines.alfaro@peacebrigades.ch)

Communication & fundraising assistant

links

- [Peace Brigades International \(PBI\) Switzerland](#)
- [Missing voices annual report](#)

---

reports

# Peacebuilding and cooking: Calabash in Kenya





The Calabash community restaurant is part of Cuisine sans frontières' Orwa project in Kenya. Caspar Hedberg

Over a decade ago, members of Cuisine sans frontières (Csf) traveled to the wide expanse of the Great Rift Valley on the border between West Pokot and Turkana County in Kenya.

The herds people of the tribes living there were at war over the waterholes and were stealing one another's cattle. Exploited by local warlords, armed groups formed who ambushed convoys and enriched themselves by smuggling weapons and ammunition.

Despite all this, a project called Cabesi (Camels, Bees, Silk) was successfully established in regions of both West Pokot and Turkana, and the construction of a camel-oriented community center was planned in the small town of Orwa. The idea of introducing the camel to the Pokot as livestock was also intended to offer a solution to the water scarcity caused by climate change. As the Turkana people were already used to farming camels, the camel community center was devised to contribute to the knowledge sharing and reconciliation between the two tribes.

The task for Csf was to create accommodation and a restaurant alongside the camel community center. It provided the materials for construction and sent volunteers to Orwa. From this, the Calabash restaurant was created, with a kitchen, storeroom, dining area, a few simple huts for overnight stays, and a large outdoor space. Beforehand, Csf met the chiefs of the nearby villages and made contact with the leaders of the armed groups. During careful negotiations, the workers presented the concept of the community center combining a restaurant, seminars, and exchange on camels, which was accepted and welcomed.

The opening of Calabash was a major event locally, which attracted over 1,000 people. Goats were slaughtered, ugali and sukuma wiki were prepared, and the premises were decorated with paper lanterns. Representatives from all the tribes were invited, with the request to leave the Kalashnikovs at home. The guests complied, and the inaugural

celebration was enjoyed peacefully.

Since then, Csf teams have returned numerous times. The team of locals can cope with the work, but Csf's presence also protects them from attacks by either side. Today, Calabash is an oasis of peace and provides a meeting place for local residents. There have been no further violent clashes for ten years now. Instead, the center has hosted beauty competitions, theater productions, sports days, movie nights, and football is shown regularly too. Even tourists occasionally spend the night at Calabash. The fighting has reduced considerably, and the establishment is well on the way to becoming self-sustaining. Peacebuilding means working on community building, and cooking is at the heart of the community.

### [Cuisine sans frontières](#)

Anna Hofmann

[anna.hofmann@cuisinesansfrontieres.ch](mailto:anna.hofmann@cuisinesansfrontieres.ch)

Managing Director

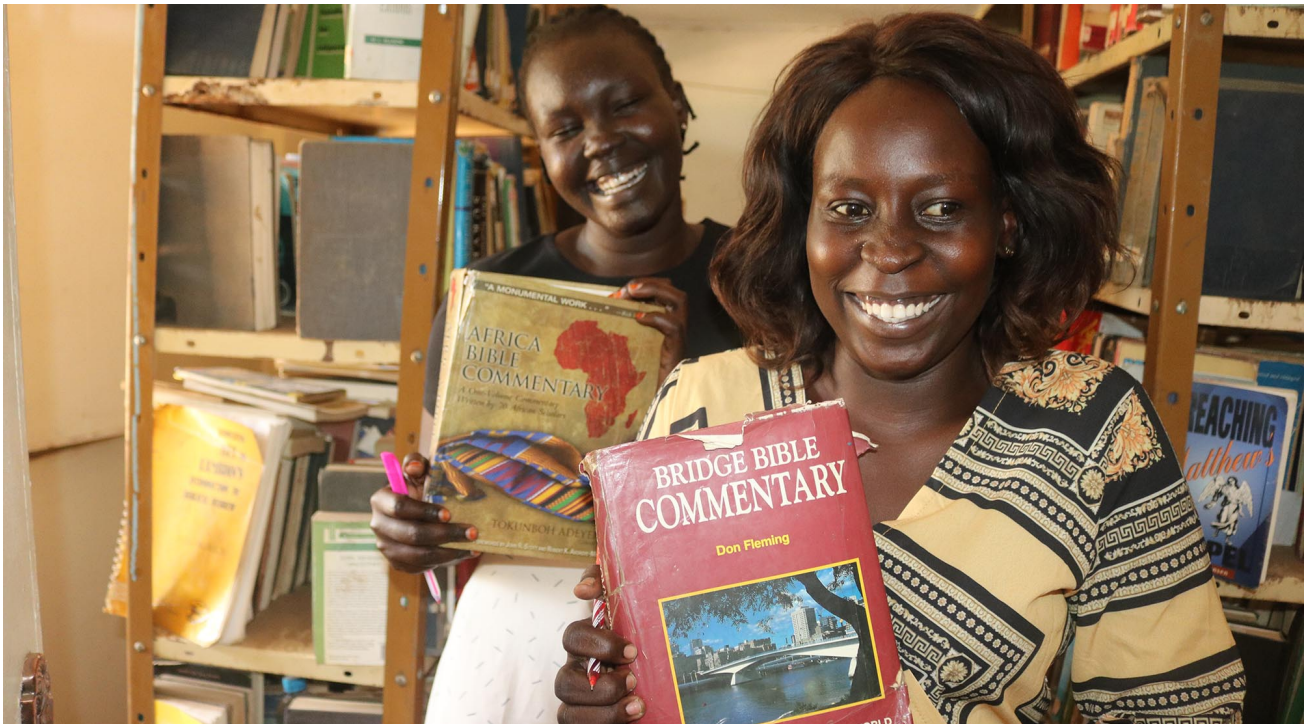
### links

- [Cuisine sans frontières \(Csf\)](#)
- [Cuisine sans frontières in Orwa](#)

---

reports

# South Sudan – the positive role of religion in peace



Students at Nile Theological College copyright Mission 21

Does religion promote peace? We often hear of religion stoking or even sparking conflicts rather than playing a role in restoring peace.

It is a different story in South Sudan. This majority-Christian country declared its independence from the Muslim north in 2011. Yet only two years later, a civil war broke out as a result of power politics, which was then played out in the country's ethnic divisions. Even though more than an ample number of peace treaties have been concluded since, violence is still a constant presence in many parts of the country.

Mission 21 works in the country as a Christian NGO, primarily in collaboration with faith-based partner organizations. In South Sudan, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) and the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS) are key partners regarding peacebuilding. In the PCOSS, peacebuilding efforts begin even as early as theological training. Through the Nile Theological College (NTC), the churches have been focusing on the provision of university education for pastors. Working to promote peace and reconciliation is embedded in the curriculum just as much as a thorough understanding of leadership. The students, among them 12 women, are encouraged to debate issues from a socio-critical perspective rather than just adopting the views of others. As pastors, they will later have a strong influence on the people in their parishes and can therefore become "agents of peace." The sizes of the parishes mean that between 1,000 and 3,000 people will hear the words of a pastor at a Sunday service. For this reason, a theological misinterpretation of the role of the pastor itself involves a high level of risk.

Experience has also shown that women, in particular, achieve considerable success in reconciliation work. Many express support for peacebuilding efforts because they want their children to have a secure future without violence. The "Women for Peace" project, supported by Mission 21, empowers women in various roles. This can take the form of theological training but can also be through primary or vocational education. Women are also supported with regard to generating income. This is important when it comes to

making their voices heard in a male-dominated country. The empowerment of women and promotion of their rights is also of fundamental importance in enabling women to play a more active role in the peace process.

#### [Mission 21 - Protestant Mission Basel](#)

Dorina Waldmeyer

Program Officer South Sudan

#### links

- [Mission 21 - Protestant Mission Basel](#)

---

in depth

# Strengthening Security Sector Governance in Ethiopia



Bole, Addis Ababa, February 2015. Jasmine Halki / Creative Commons

Ethiopia is at a critical crossroads with increased tensions in several regions (conflict in Tigray, elections, an ambitious reform agenda of the Prime Minister, and a political transition process). The country faces unprecedented internal security crises alongside growing political and ethnic polarization, which are increasingly threatening peace and stability. Yet, despite these challenges, the current context provides a relatively permissive environment to pursue strategic reforms of the police, which can help address some of the

structural or institutional factors that have contributed to or enabled the escalation of the recent violence and conflict. A path to peace and development will primarily require cross-societal political dialogue and agreement. Additionally, addressing the security sector governance and reform deficits is crucial in pursuing conflict prevention efforts. However, both national and international stakeholders have only given little attention to security sector governance in Ethiopia.

In the absence of an effective civilian oversight system, it has been challenging to limit political influence on security operations, hold the security sector accountable for human rights abuses, influence the behavior of security institutions, and create a more citizen-oriented approach to security in Ethiopia. The lack of effective external demand for reform or changing behavior has allowed the security sector to maintain some detrimental habits or even act with impunity. The main challenge lies in the fact that the Ministry of Peace, created in 2018, has been tasked with overseeing all civilian security agencies with a limited capacity and insufficiently defined responsibilities for security sector oversight. The Ministry only has a handful of staff dedicated to overseeing the police. Some of them are seconded to the Ministry by the police themselves. In practice, these staff members often support other tasks of the Ministry, including the coordination of humanitarian aid. With more than 140,000 police officers in Africa's second-most populous country, it is clear that the ministerial law enforcement bureaucracy's assigned capacity is not up to the complex task of reviewing the performance, budget, and conduct, and even to monitor the implementation of police reforms. Therefore, the Ministry has often deferred responsibilities to other institutions or left the police to govern themselves. However, building the Ministry's capacity needs to go hand in hand with developing a strategic concept defining its overall role in the broader framework of security sector governance.

Ethiopia also needs to review its regional and federal security architecture critically. This includes better regulating actors involved in internal security, aimed at reducing the use of or involvement of special forces and militias in policing or other critical homeland security matters. Due to poor regulation and lack of oversight, regions have often used their broad power to establish special forces that could rival militaries in equipment and size. In addition, the lack of clear standards for operations and training and the absence of effective oversight of special forces has often resulted in them being misused to instigate violence or attacks. The recent surge of conflicts confirms the need for a wide-ranging and strategic dialogue on overseeing and holding such actors accountable and for a long-term strategy of winding down their operations to empower regular police to perform the tasks that should fall within their mandates.

Since the start of the political transition in 2018, the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission has been quietly initiating some important reforms. With its ambitious reform agenda and a leadership keen on pursuing reform, now is arguably the most opportune moment to reform the Ethiopian Federal Police despite the crisis. In late 2020, Ethiopia introduced an ambitious new policing doctrine that commits both federal and regional police to uphold international standards, values, and principles. While the policing doctrine is not a guarantee that a reform process will follow, it does serve as an important benchmark and framework for promoting reform within the police. It especially outlines important policy commitments to ensuring the police are accountable, respect human rights, reduce political appointments and political influence on the police operations, and ensuring that the police are an inclusive and representative organization. At the same time, the new

police doctrine introduces key operational concepts of community-oriented policing and ensuring police use more proportional responses to public order, which should also directly impact policing operations. In response to the doctrine, the Ethiopian Federal Police has started necessary reforms that include developing a new public complaints handling mechanism, reinvesting at improving police training led by the Police University, exploring concepts of intelligence-led policing, and prioritizing the structures and approaches to investigations.

Strengthening the efficiency and accountability of the police is central to providing the tools to the Government to apply a more proportionate and effective response to emerging security challenges in Ethiopia. Despite an evident opportunity to advance police reforms, the remaining challenge is that the international community has not readily prioritized the needed advisory and financial support to the reform process.

[DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance](#)

Alexander Burian

Senior SSR Advisor, Sub-Saharan Africa Division

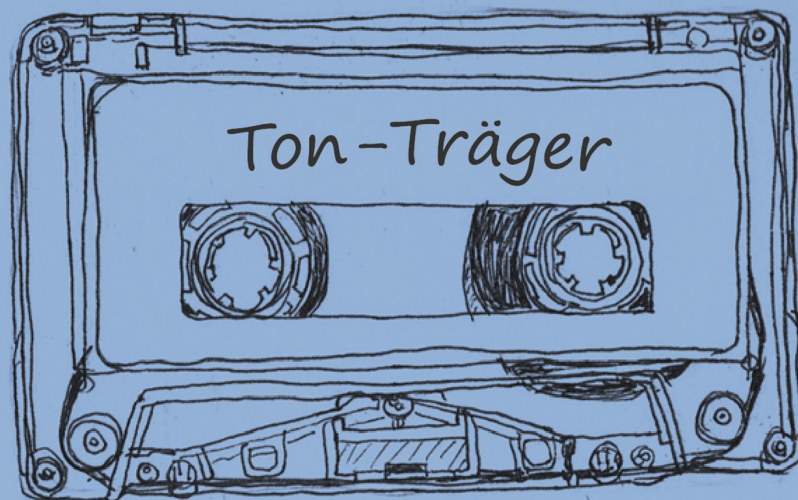
[links](#)

[- DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance](#)

---

news

# The fourth episode of KOFF Ton-Träger is out!



The fourth episode of *KOFF Ton-Träger* sheds light on the promotion of a culture of nonviolence and peace (CNV&P) during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Three peacebuilding experts discuss the concept of CNV&P, its relevance for their peacebuilding work, and the challenges and opportunities arising from the pandemic for their engagement at the community and multilateral level as well as in the digital sphere.

**Guests:**

Katia Aeby, Managing Director of Peace Brigades International Switzerland

Florence Foster, Representative for Peace and Disarmament at the Quakers United Nations Office

Emma Baumhofer, Digital Peacebuilding Expert at swisspeace

**Moderation & realization:**

Natalina Haller, KOFF/swisspeace

links

- [Listen to the podcast](#)

---

news

# Register now for a swisspeace continuing education program



## RELIGION, PEACE & CONFLICT

September 2021 - October 2022

CAS  
Certificate of Advanced Studies



## PEACEBUILDING ESSENTIALS

September 2021 - October 2022

CAS  
Certificate of Advanced Studies

The Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) Religion, Peace & Conflict explores different aspects of religion with regard to peace and conflict. The course looks at the roles religion may play in peace and conflict, the relation between religion and the state, and radicalization through various case studies.

The Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) Peacebuilding Essentials is designed for practitioners and academics interested in bridging their own experiences with current conceptual insights and practical knowledge on peacebuilding.

The two programs run from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022, and the three modules take place at the University of Basel or in a virtual format.

[links](#)

- [Apply by 30 August 2021!](#)

---

news

# terre des hommes schweiz publishes a study on European arms



# exports



Bruno Itan #olharcomplexo, police operation in Rio de Janeiro

Easy access to firearms is a major driver of violence in Brazil. What responsibility do arms suppliers like Switzerland have? A new study by terre des hommes schweiz and terre des hommes Germany explores this question. It analyzes the extent of gun violence in Brazil and the role that armaments from Europe play in violent crime in Brazil. In addition, it reveals the background to the increasing lethal police violence and assesses the efficiency of state arms stock control. Recommendations are then provided for stronger regulation of Swiss arms exports to Brazil.

## links

- [Download the study \(ge\)](#)

---

## news

# swisspeace publishes a new policy brief



swisspeace publishes a new policy brief that summarizes the findings of a joint learning process on peacebuilding and migration, facilitated by KOFF – the Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding, and the resulting web toolbox on migration in peacebuilding. It highlights the relevance of a systematic and strategic engagement with migration in peacebuilding, showcases some practical examples, and points to areas that need further investment and attention from the peace policy sector.

[links](#)

- [Read the policy brief](#)

---

calendar

# Events

## **KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE**

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

---

## **ILANZER SOMMER**

**8 – 14 August 2021**

During the Ilanzer Summer, the Forum for Peace Culture will offer about thirty events in Ilanz on the culture of peace. **Cultural events**, a **FORUM** and exciting **panel guests** are planned. The first FORUM Ilanzer Sommer is dedicated to the core topic of peace culture in communities, schools and the media. The cultural program includes thought-provoking talks with prominent personalities as well as the projection of the film series *Summer of Peace*

**Guests:**

Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf

Jakob Kellenberger

John-Paul Lederach Corin Curschellas.

Inscription

Details

---

This is an automatically generated PDF file.  
Read à propos: [www.swisspeace.ch/apropos](http://www.swisspeace.ch/apropos)

---

<b>Publisher</b>	KOFF
<b>Contact</b>	Steinengraben 22, 4051 Basel, Switzerland, Phone: +41 (0)31 330 12 12
<b>Editing</b>	Sanjally Jobarteh, Fabian Hofmann, Natalina Haller
<b>Translation</b>	Übersetzergruppe Zürich, Furrer Übersetzungen
<b>Cover</b>	Minkaman, Awerial County, South Sudan © Oxfam East Africa / 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 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
cfd	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		