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Publisher:
Center for
Peacebuilding KOFF
Sonnenbergstrasse 17
CH - 3000 Bern 7
Tel: +41 (0)31 330 12 12
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KOFF – swisspeace

Links

- [World Development Report](#)
- [Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development](#)
- [KOFF](#)
- [Discussion paper](#)
- [Minutes](#)
- [FDFA diplomatic initiatives](#)

Further information:
KOFF [Sidonia Gabriel](#)

World Development Report 2011 and the Geneva Declaration

The publication of the World Development Report 2011 together with the upcoming Review Conference on the Geneva Declaration provided an opportunity for a KOFF event on policy progress in the areas of development cooperation and peacebuilding. Representatives of Swiss NGOs, the Secretariat of the Geneva Declaration, the Political Affairs Division IV of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency, and the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport were in agreement that the Report and the Declaration do not contain something substantially new. However, the arguments put forward are important in view of the influence which actors concerned can exert on future implementation efforts. Moreover they enable NGOs to remind states of their existing commitments.

The exchange provided an opportunity to discuss ways in which Swiss NGOs can participate in the policy processes. The Secretariat would like to see NGOs being more active in processes around the Geneva Declaration, as they have much experience in fragile environments beset by violence. The 2nd Review Conference on the Declaration, being held in Geneva, is indeed an opportune moment for increased participation by NGOs. Some of the participants identified an opportunity for exerting greater influence through the inclusion of local partner organizations in the Declaration's regional networks. The importance of open exchanges of experience between organizations active in fragile situations was also stressed. A shared understanding of a given armed conflict, for example through a joint conflict analysis, would help to enhance coordinated efforts in confronting the challenges in such contexts.

10.10.2011

Links

- [UN Women](#)
- [UN Department of Political Affairs](#)
- [swisspeace: mediation webpages](#)

Trainings on gender and mediation in Central Asia

The United Nations are strengthening efforts to address women's security and peacebuilding needs in mediation. The UN Department of Political Affairs and UN Women thus launched a three-year joint strategy on gender and mediation. This strategy aims to enhance the availability and quality of gender expertise in mediation processes and to enable increased and more effective participation by women. As one of the key activities, UN Women has developed two trainings on gender dimensions of mediation for countries in Central Asia. In this context swisspeace was mandated by UN Women to conduct two 5-day trainings of trainers on gender and mediation in late September and early October in Kyrgyzstan. Around 30 participants from Central Asia, Russia and Georgia attended the sessions in Bishkek with the first week reserved for civil servants and the second for civil society representatives.

Further information:
swisspeace [Rachel Gasser](#)

The two trainings facilitated by swisspeace focused through a gender lens on strengthening participants' capacities in mediation techniques and skills such as gendered context and conflict analysis, communication as well as negotiation methods. The participants were also introduced to new training methodologies as well as role plays, case studies and simulations from around the world. Key issues discussed included ways to get women at the negotiation table, gender-sensitive models of mediation and possibilities to include delicate topics, for example sexual violence, in mediation processes.

These trainings allowed participants to better understand the main concepts of gender and mediation and provided them with the necessary skills for face-to-face trainings. The course experience will therefore be useful to further develop such trainings in the region.

07.10.2011

Links

- [KOFF website](#)

Further information:
KOFF [Rahel Fischer](#)

A Whiff of Arab Spring

Six young activists from Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt met for an exchange of views with representatives of Swiss NGOs and authorities to discuss events in North Africa and the Middle East. Aged between 21 and 31 they represent the so-called „new generation“, who is mainly responsible for the Arab Spring. The participants were heavily involved in protests and uprisings in their respective countries, either as internet activist, as organizer of demonstrations or as freedom fighters. What makes this generation different from previous ones? What is their vision? What are their hopes and fears for the future? How do they imagine their future state? And what role will women play in it? These questions were addressed during the discussions. The views of these young women and men were as different as the realities in their countries of origin. All agreed however that the radical changes and awakening in the Arab world announce a better future, although the situation might first get worse. The most urgent tasks following the demise of the dictators are the establishment of an independent judiciary and the transformation of the economic system in order to combat endemic unemployment and structural corruption. They also touched on the role of the new media, which made possible innovative forms of mobilization and the widest possible access to information, stimulating the expression of a diversity of views. The fact that women played such an active role in these changes makes the activists feel that the position of women will be improved in the future state.

What they expect from Switzerland is above all support in building up civil society, in strengthening the process of democratization and documenting war crimes so as to hold the past and present regimes accountable for their deeds.

17.10.2011

Links

- [KOFF website](#)

Further information:
KOFF [Ursula Keller](#)

Gender Perspective on Sudan after the Secession

Before and in the aftermath of the declaration of independence of South Sudan, which ended the six-year transitional period provided by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), analyses dealt with a broad range of issues. Yet, the question of how the new political setting will affect women's status and rights in Sudan has received less attention. What are the implications of the secession for political rights and participation of women both in the North and the South? How can female participation be strengthened in the current statebuilding phase in the South and what roles do women play in the current constitutional process in the North? These questions have been discussed at a KOFF Roundtable in October with two well-known Sudanese civil society and women's rights activists.

Women in the South face tremendous challenges with respect to the fulfillment of their basic social and economic rights. Nonetheless, their participation in the political transition is partly guaranteed due to a 25 percent quota that was introduced during the CPA period. In the North the constitutional process triggered far-reaching societal debates on the character of the new state, raising the question whether it will continue to be built on a civic and pluralistic understanding or be defined primarily in religious terms. The result of those debates will impact the role women will be able to play in the future. Civil society organizations therefore aim to extend the debates over a new constitution, encouraging popular participation and women's mobilization. The developments, successes and challenges of the Arab Spring are carefully monitored and serve as source of inspiration, although the Sudanese women have to develop their „own formula“ as they search for their place in the Sudanese state. 21.10.2011

Links

- [Dealing with the Past: course website](#)
- [FDFA: Dealing with the Past](#)
- [Joinet/Orentlicher Principles](#)

Dealing with the Past of Human Rights Violations: a Course for Practitioners

Dealing with past human rights violations is a major challenge in post-war societies and often leads to renewed tensions. In recent years Switzerland has developed an innovative approach in the area of dealing with the past. The Political Affairs Division IV of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) therefore again offered this year a three-part „Advanced Learning Course on Dealing with the Past“ in collaboration with KOFF/swisspeace. The aim is to improve the skills of both governmental and non-governmental personnel in this area and promote more sustained exchanges of experience between practitioners.

The course content was organized around the four Joinet/Orentlicher principles: the right to know, the right to justice, the right to reparation and the guarantee of non-recurrence. In the first module renowned experts including Richard Goldstone, Yasmin Sooka and Carlos Castresana spent a week with participants discussing topics such as truth commissions, fact-finding committees, exhumations, international tribunals and criminal prosecutions as well as strategies for combating impunity at the national level. Taking advantage of what they had

Further information:
KOFF [Rahel Fischer](#)

learned, participants then focused in a second virtual module on the challenges specific to their own context. In the third module at the end of October experts including Brandon Hamber, Helen Mack and Pablo de Greiff addressed the following issues: victim-perpetrator dynamics, reconciliation processes, conflict-sensitivity in dealing with the past and its role in conflict transformation, reparation programs, psychosocial rehabilitation, security sector and judicial reforms, as well as demobilization and demilitarization programs. Combining theoretical inputs with practical exercises, group work with simulations, the course offered participants from eleven countries many opportunities to discuss the different approaches and lessons learned, linking them to conflict transformation.

28.10.2011

Focus

Links

- [Centre for Conflict Mitigation at the National University of Rwanda](#)
- [swisspeace: Dealing with the Past](#)
- [KOFF event on 4 November on the Gacaca process](#)

Evaluating Rwanda's Gacaca Courts

A unique alternative form of justice was introduced in Rwanda to address crimes relating to the 1994 genocide. The Gacaca process is based on traditional mechanisms such as public confession, trying to establish the truth by confronting oral statements made at hearings. The Gacaca courts were however a leap in the dark. As the court proceedings draw to a close the assessment is mostly positive.

After the genocide Rwanda's judicial system faced up to its responsibilities and conventional courts began to try the accused. It soon became clear that the quest for justice was blocked by seemingly unsolvable problems. Trials proceeded at such a slow pace that after five years only 6'000 had reached a verdict. There were over 120'000 suspects awaiting their turn in prison. Meanwhile a growing number of survivors were dying from the sequels to the crimes and the traumata, without seeing justice done. The need for an alternative solution to the unending litigations was ever more pressing.

Alternative conflict transformation

In order to meet this challenge the Gacaca courts were created in Rwanda in 2001. A purpose-designed legal framework ensured that the fact-finding, court procedures and the general workings of this alternative justice mechanism could function in the same way throughout the country. The existence of such courts all over the country made it easier for victims and accused alike to have access to justice within a reasonable timeframe. Over 10 years about a million cases have been heard.

The Gacaca courts also helped to solve two other major problems arising from the genocide. The first concerns the many family relationships which have been destroyed. What future relationship could exist for example between a father convicted of the murder of his wife and their children who were the main witnesses against him? The demand for justice could thus not be dissociated from the need to restore relationships within and between families. The second problem is that crimes were committed in almost every corner of Rwanda: incitement to genocide, denunciations, rapes, murders and looting were ubiquitous. At stake was the individual responsibility of hundreds of thousands of suspects, not just the symbolic condemnation of a few high-ranking leaders. In view of the extent of the genocide no conventional fact-finding method could possibly deal with the countless cases in a credible way and within a reasonable period of time.

Solution criticized on all sides

The idea of an alternative justice mechanism met with strong opposition. Many actors in the international community, human rights activists in particular, could not understand how genocide-related cases could be left to Inyangamugayo judges, who in many cases had no grasp of classical legal principles. Even among the victims and accused doubts were raised as to the appropriateness, independence and effectiveness of the Gacaca courts.

Yet, the first positive experiences laid these fears to rest. Even though incomplete the information obtained made it possible to locate the bodies of many victims and give them a decent burial. By piecing together the fragmented facts it became possible in the course of the hearings to slowly shed light on the truth. In the end even many defendants endorsed the credibility of the Gacaca process. Those who were ready to speak out and ask the victims for forgiveness often had part of their sentence turned into community service. On the other hand for the same crime those who preferred to remain caught up in their own lies were sentenced to longer terms of imprisonment.

Uniqueness of Gacaca courts

This original alternative approach to justice has achieved a number of successes. First of all it has ensured that crimes of genocide are prosecuted, regardless of the number of perpetrators, the extent of the crimes or the destruction. Thus, in a relatively short period of time hundreds of thousands of accused have been brought to justice in a systematic and orderly manner before Gacaca courts, without prejudice to existing laws.

The effectiveness of the system derives from its decentralised nature and a fact-finding procedure that relies on active participation by the local population. This participation did not always contribute in the same way to the prosecution. It did however have a cathartic effect on citizens, because the Gacaca process has forced each individual to confront the reality and the own behavior during the genocide. The Gacaca procedures have also made it possible for victims and perpetrators to look each other in the eye and speak about the horrors of the genocide. Public apologies and forgiveness have helped to rebuild social relationships. In this way the Gacaca courts have facilitated both the condemnation of culprits and their reintegration in society, while laying the foundations for collective future memory.

The process has demonstrated the ability of the people of Rwanda to overcome deep divisions and work together to find solutions to fundamental problems. Its success cannot of course hide the fact that some crimes committed during the genocide remain unknown and go unpunished. The assessment of this justice system has shown however that it managed to satisfy two essential needs of the post-genocide society of Rwanda: justice and reconciliation. The Gacaca courts thus represent a unique legacy in the field of conflict resolution, not just for Rwanda but for the international community.

27.10.2011

Further information:
National University of
Rwanda, Centre for
Conflict Mitigation,
[Paul Rutayisire](#)

News from Swiss NGOs

Links

- [Al Jazeera video report](#)
- [Brücke · Le pont projects in Salvador](#)
- [Geneva Declaration](#)

Further information:
Brücke · Le pont
[José Balmer](#)

Brücke · Le pont: Youth Employment against Violence

The state of El Salvador is fighting against criminal gangs and the drug mafia without much success so far. Due to a general lack of education and employment opportunities young people in particular are attracted by criminal organizations and are most exposed to violence whether as victims or perpetrators. In an effort to open new perspectives for the youth of El Salvador, the aid organization Brücke · Le pont is engaged in three projects.

The partner organization Servicio Social Pasionista de El Salvador (SSPAS) is in charge of one of these projects, making it one of the few organizations active in the most violent areas of San Salvador. Thanks to this project 300 youths living in precarious conditions have the opportunity to complete short courses in courier services, cosmetics or computer maintenance. They also receive support in seeking work. Considering the extent of the violence within the families as well as in the street, courses in the prevention of violence and conflict resolution are integral parts of the project. At present 15 new local youth groups are being set up. These make it possible for many young people to organize their leisure time for and with children in a meaningful way. Such groups also strengthen lobbying efforts towards the local authorities for a constructive youth policy.

According to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development greater efforts are needed also outside areas of conflict to reduce armed violence and the demand for weapons. Therefore, Brücke · Le pont youth projects are designed for the long term with the objective to foster an enduring climate of respect among youths and in their environment. The organization thus wants to make a contribution to reduce the breeding ground for armed violence in El Salvador.

05.10.2011

Links

- [HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation](#)
- [KOFF webpages on conflict-sensitivity](#)

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Workshop on Development Cooperation in Afghanistan

For nearly 10 years HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation has been operating in a conflict-sensitive manner in many countries affected by violence. In an effort to benefit from these program and project experiences and to fine-tune an approach specific to HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, the organization is currently preparing with KOFF/swisspeace a handbook for the implementation of conflict-sensitive approaches in the field.

To ensure that the realities and requirements of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's field work are taken into account, a workshop was conducted in Afghanistan in October. This provided an opportunity for presenting the handbook, testing the approach and obtaining feedbacks in Kabul. Representatives of local non-governmental partner organizations as well as staff of the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation district offices in Afghanistan participated in the workshop. Also involved was the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC) in Afghanistan

Further information:
HELVETAS Swiss Intercoo-
peration [Esther Marthaler](#)

with which frequent exchanges exist. The workshop raised many methodological questions concerning development cooperation in fragile, complex situations. Discussing the challenges involved in working in such difficult contexts in the presence of armed groups, the participants stressed that development cooperation is essential for the people of Afghanistan. Lessons and points raised during the workshop will further enrich the handbook. 14.10.2011

Links

- [EU Guidelines](#)
- [UN Declaration](#)
- [PBI Switzerland](#)

Further information:
PBI [Lisa Salza](#)

PBI Jubilee Conference: Effective Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders (HRD) are only useful if implemented. Moreover they become relevant when those concerned are aware of them and know how to use them. This is the conclusion reached by representatives of the United Nations, the Swiss government and international NGOs as well as independent experts at the Jubilee Conference of Peace Brigades International (PBI) on 19 October in Geneva.

In recent years the international community, recognizing the key role played by HRDs, developed a range of instruments for their protection. The UN Declaration, EU Guidelines and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs are all intended to strengthen the protection of defenders. Nonetheless, according to the conference participants effective implementation of these instruments is possible only with strong support from various decision-making circles, together with widely-accepted evaluation and monitoring mechanisms and appropriate resources. The full catalogue of recommendations will soon be published on the PBI Switzerland website.

It was also reported at the conference that the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is preparing directives on the protection of HRDs. Switzerland will be able to build on the best practices of the EU. There is however the danger of copying existing mechanisms. Widespread consultations with defenders themselves as well as human rights experts should make it possible to develop Swiss guidelines for the protection of HRDs that are effective and widely supported. In the initial phase, they will serve to create greater awareness of the need for protection of human rights defenders among FDFA personnel, and as a catalogue of measures for embassy staff. 19.10.2011

News from Swiss Government Agencies

Links

- [Political Affairs Division IV of the FDFA](#)
- [Human Rights Council](#)

Further information:
FDFA [Mô Bleeker](#)

UN Human Rights Council Adopts Resolution Presented by Switzerland

Combating impunity, dealing with the past, restoring the rule of law and rehabilitating victims are often central to the achievement of a lasting peace and rebuilding a society that has been subject to serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. These issues are also among the priorities of Swiss foreign policy. For this reason the Political Affairs Division IV of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) proposed the creation of a UN mandate for a Special Rapporteur.

The resolution put forward by Switzerland together with Argentina and Morocco, adopted by the Human Rights Council on 29 September, institutes a Special Rapporteur for the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. The resolution was sponsored by nearly 80 states representing all regional groups. The Special Rapporteur will be the focal point on these issues within the UN System, providing member states with recommendations, advice and technical assistance to enable them to deal adequately with situations involving serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

This new mandate is a major achievement for Switzerland, which has been engaged in this area for many years. It underlines the positive role which the Human Rights Council plays in the concrete implementation of human rights and is at the same time an acknowledgement by the states of the importance of dealing appropriately with serious violations of human rights. Furthermore it should help to fight impunity, spurring states to fulfil their obligations, allowing the voice of the victims to be heard and guaranteeing that their rights are respected.

01.10.2011

Links

- [Rules of Engagement Report](#)
- [Political Affairs Division IV of the FDFA](#)
- [Geneva Academy](#)

Engaging Armed Non-State Actors in the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

Civilians account for the vast majority of casualties in contemporary armed conflicts. As acknowledged by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, one of the main protection challenges is the weak compliance with international law by armed non-state actors (ANSA). In order to respond to this pressing concern the United Nations encouraged members to identify additional measures to improve compliance.

Since 2009 the Political Affairs Division IV of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (ADH) have been working on new approaches and tools to improve ANSAs' compliance with international norms. This endeavor resulted in a reference document for humanitarian and mediation practitioners entitled „Rules of Engagement: Promoting the Protection of Civilians through Dialogue with Armed Non-State Actors“. This report proves particularly innovative, since it is based on

Further information:

FDFA

[Isabelle Gomez Truedsson](#)

ADH

[Stuart Maslen](#)

applied research and a consultation process that involved all actors concerned including ANSAs. This inclusive approach addresses current challenges and reflects contemporary dilemmas in fieldwork.

The report presents a detailed set of conclusions and recommendations for a range of actors, particularly humanitarian and mediation practitioners, ANSAs as well as governments. These results are the fruit of many years of humanitarian practice and expertise that should inform current efforts of practitioners involved in humanitarian engagement with ANSAs. The overarching conclusion recognizes the urgent need for increased humanitarian engagement with ANSAs. It implies that more systematic efforts need to be undertaken by different members of the international community in order to make a real difference in the protection of civilians at risk.

16.10.2011

Links

- [PA IV Annual Conference](#)

PA IV Annual Conference: Uprisings in the Arab World

A spirit of optimism swept through the Stade de Suisse in Berne on 18 October on the occasion of the Annual Conference of the Political Affairs Division IV (PA IV) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Intellectuals, politicians and representatives of young people from the Arab world and Europe stressed the historical and social importance of changes taking place in the Arab region. The fight for dignity, freedom and human rights against dictatorships with which the West has too long curried favor, is continuing. Although the transition process is expected to last as there are still many obstacles to overcome, the Arab peoples and in particular the youth are determined to take the future into their own hands. This message inspired much hope for the 800 persons attending the conference. Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey therefore said that in transforming the Arab world these young activists have changed the whole world. During the conference they explained their struggle and tried to make it clear that there is no need to fear either chaos, Islamic fundamentalism or tribal conflicts in their home countries as consequences of the uprisings, since the process of change is being driven by the people themselves and the new spirit of democracy will have a stabilizing influence. Moreover they expressed a strong belief in the rule of law, since politicians who come to power through elections can also be removed through the ballot box.

Europe aims to support the region in regard to political transition, reforms, economic and social development, as well as in the fight against poverty. As for Switzerland, it is offering technical, professional and political expertise in a number of areas ranging from vocational training to democratization and the establishment of the rule of law. The restitution of illicit assets has a high priority in this context. A number of Arab speakers however denounced the West's double standard, having waited long before exerting pressure on certain dictators while

Further information:
FDFA [Mario Carera](#)

refraining from criticism towards other regimes that are equally guilty of systematic human rights violations. Following the revolutions in Eastern Europe the perspective of joining the European Union helped to speed up reforms and exerted strong attraction. This perspective does not exist for the Arab countries. The foundations for a partnership with the new emerging countries of the Arab world therefore still need to be laid.

18.10.2011

Links

- [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#)
- [FDFA: International dialogue on migration](#)

Further information:
FDFA [Bettina Etter](#)

Switzerland Chairs Global Forum on Migration and Development

This year Switzerland chairs the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The GFMD was created in 2006 upon the initiative of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in an effort to strengthen the dialogue on migration at the multilateral level. At present the most important platform on migration and development, the GFMD encourages exchanges of experience and cooperation between interested states and organizations.

Under the theme „Taking Action on Migration and Development – Coherence, Capacity and Cooperation“ and in close collaboration with dedicated states, Switzerland organized 14 thematic meetings in various regions of the world. Topics at the centre of the debates included labor mobility and its impact on development, as well as coherent measures to combat irregular migration. The results of these regional meetings will be discussed at the GFMD 2011 Concluding Debate on 1-2 December in Geneva. As chair, Switzerland launched an evaluation of the GFMD process in collaboration with 13 other states. Moreover, Switzerland succeeded in securing the commitment of the Republic of Mauritius to chair the GFMD in the year 2012. This constitutes a major achievement, considering that no African state has yet held the GFMD chairmanship.

The GFMD chairmanship has provided Switzerland with an excellent opportunity to contribute to shaping and strengthening the multilateral dialogue on migration and development. The Swiss approach and commitment are increasingly acknowledged by a variety of states and organizations. This has enabled Switzerland to position itself as an innovative force and influential stakeholder in the multilateral dialogue on migration and development.

21.10.2011

International Partner Organizations

Info

News from ten international KOFF partner organizations.

- [Berghof Conflict Research](#)
- [CDA Collaborative Learning Projects](#)
- [Conciliation Resources](#)
- [European Centre for Conflict Prevention](#)
- [EPLO](#)
- [forumZFD](#)
- [FriEnt](#)
- [GIZ](#)
- [International Alert](#)
- [Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung](#)

FriEnt

- FriEnt presents its [biannual report](#) 2009-2010. It addresses in particular issues and challenges around FriEnt's three thematic priorities „peacebuilding paradigms“, „international processes“ and „land conflicts“. These areas are illustrated by a number of case studies on the role of mediation, elections or land restitution in peacebuilding.

Conciliation Resources

- Conciliation Resources has published a new [policy brief](#) on the armed conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army as part of the People's Peacemaking Perspectives [project](#). Research in areas affected by the conflict in Uganda, eastern DR Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan reflects a „people's perspective“ on the conflict and international responses.

International Alert

- International Alert released a [report](#), which examines the current involvement of women in Lebanese politics, as well as opportunities for increasing their participation. The report illustrates the work of the organization with the youth wings of political parties in Lebanon and covers a conference on the promotion of gender equality in political parties.

forumZFD

- The forumZFD has published the September issue of „[Fokus.Westbalkan](#)“. It analyzes civilian conflict resolution activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia, examining the latest developments in the Balkans.

Events

Info

This section gives pointers to selected events in Switzerland pertaining to civil peacebuilding.

- The [Annual Conference](#) of the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) is being held on 9 November in Bern on the subject of „Research Partnerships for Development: Role and Challenges in a Globalising World“.
- This year's [short film festival](#) in Winterthur on 9-13 November offers two special programmes „Hilfe. Die Schweiz kommt!“ and „Africa is...“ dealing both with humanitarian and development cooperation themes.
- The book „Dépasser la haine, construire la paix. Témoignages de paix de la région des Grands Lacs“ of Eirene Switzerland and COTMEC has been published by „Editions d'en bas“. [Presentations](#) with readings and contributions by witnesses from the Great Lakes Region will take place in Geneva, Sion, Lausanne and Fribourg between 10-15 November. [To order](#) and [contact](#).

- The [swisspeace Annual Conference](#) will focus on the topic „Money Makers as Peace Makers? The Role of Business in Conflict Zones“. At the centre of discussions will be the question of how multinational and local companies can contribute to build peace in areas of conflict. The conference takes place in Bern on 15 November.
- The Institute for Peacebuilding [Steps for peace](#) is offering a [training course](#) on 12-16 December in Berlin entitled „Training of Trainers in Peacebuilding: Training skills for culturally adapted and sustainable learning processes in crisis regions“.
- The feminist peace organisation cfd and its partners are organizing the „16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence“ [campaign](#) between 25 November and 10 December. Events are aimed at increasing public awareness, focusing on individual and collective ways to escape violence. [Contact](#).

Publications

Info

- [Séverine Autesserre: The Trouble with the Congo](#)

Forgotten local conflict dynamics

Analyzing the flawed transition from war to peace and democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Séverine Autesserre proposes a new argument to account for the failures of international peacebuilding efforts.

Based on thorough knowledge drawn from over 300 interviews, the book „The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peace building“ exposes local conflict dynamics in eastern Congo in the form of land conflicts, rivalries over resources and power struggles. Addressing these local realities is essential to build peace in the DR Congo. Yet, the author finds that international peacebuilders have failed to do so. Instead, international actors and in particular the United Nations have worked with the assumption that armed violence in the DR Congo has above all a national and a regional dimension through the interferences of neighboring countries, omitting to take into consideration local conflict dynamics. The author demonstrates that such approach has been shaped by the dominant international peacebuilding culture that understands violent conflict and peacebuilding interventions on a macro level, while considering local violence as unimportant and unmanageable.

As remedy, the author proposes that international peacebuilders confront their strategies and interventions against the specific realities in eastern Congo. More generally, the book argues that peace is won on the local level and therefore emphasizes the importance for international actors to work on local conflicts.

13.10.2011

Web Tip

Info

- [Civilian Capacity for Peace Operations](#)

Civilian Capacity for Peace Operations

Civilian capacities are increasingly important in complex and challenging peace operations. The Civilian Capacity for Peace Operations (Civcap) website aims to help professionalize civilian peacekeeping. The online tracking of all peace operations involving the UN, the OSCE, the EU and NATO demonstrates the relevance of this objective.

Civcap is a platform of the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) which makes available resources in the area of peacekeeping. Particularly helpful is the rapid access to the „Lessons Learned and Best Practice“ section which provides up-to-date and relevant reference documents and guidelines on specific topics such as borders, the protection of minorities or security sector reform. For exchange and networking the site offers an online discussion forum on current questions regarding for example the role of diasporas in peacebuilding.

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Address: Sonnenbergstrasse 17, CH - 3000 Bern 7
Tel: +41 (0)31 330 12 12; Fax: +41 (0)31 330 12 13

Editing: [Lukas Krienbuehl](#)

Translation: [Eric Edgell-Grimley](#)

Layout: [Liliana Rossier](#)

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