



Programme

Dresden Forum for International Politics 2024 Inclusive Peace Processes? Options and Opportunities of State and Civil Society Actors

Landhaus Dresden (City Museum)

18 April 2024

Conference languages

German/English

Partners



Freistaat
SACHSEN

BACKGROUND

Historically, peace processes conducted on equal footing are exceptional. More often, wars conclude through surrender, conquests, and peace treaties enforced by the victorious parties. The often short-lived nature of such peace underscores a critical fact: while wars might end with peace accords, not all such agreements yield long-lasting peace. Examples abound, from the unresolved issues in the Dayton negotiations over Kosovo, to the flagrant breaches of the Lusaka Agreement aimed at ending the Second Congo War, to numerous unsuccessful efforts at a two-state solution in the Middle East. Further, many peace processes not only fail to progress but have also been suffering significant setbacks in recent times. For instance, the Hamas terror attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, has severely hampered Middle Eastern peace efforts, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo ongoing conflict persists nearly three decades after its peace agreement, and the Russian war against Ukraine shows no signs of nearing a peace agreement. While such protracted conflicts seldomly yield clear military victories, yet they frequently result in a substantial loss of civilian lives.

State entities, in the roles as conflict parties, mediators, or treaty guarantors, traditionally exercise a considerable command in shaping peace processes. However, civil society's role in conflict resolution and peace building has been gaining significant strength and influence. Whether championing dialogue and reconciliation, rallying public support, or leveraging their positions in global partnerships and networks, history is full of instances where civil society's involvement in peace processes has been vital. The anti-war movement's pivotal influence in concluding the Vietnam War, civil rights organizations' major role in the Northern Ireland peace process, and women-led initiatives to ending the Liberian Civil War exemplify this. Clearly, the role of civilian-led efforts in establishing enduring peace, but likewise the emerging influence of previously less dominant nations amidst a shifting geopolitical landscape, warrant greater attention.

In this year's Dresden Forum for International Politics we seek to answer the following questions: How do state and civil society actors influence the conditions for peace processes, their initiation, and their success? How are particularly peace negotiations successfully commenced, what dynamics do they entail, and what lessons can be applied to other processes?

: Thursday, April 18, 2024

09:15 hrs Arrival, Registration & Welcome Coffee

Moderator & Host

Dr Marcus Kaplan

Executive Director, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

09.45 hrs Welcome

Viola Klein

Deputy Chairperson of the Executive Committee
Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

Prof Thomas Popp

State Secretary for Digital Administration and Modernisation of Administration, Member of the State Government and Chief Information Officer (CIO), Saxon State Government's Commissioner for Europe's Capital of Culture 2025

10.00 HRS

KEYNOTES

PERSPECTIVES ON PEACE PROCESSES

Diplomacy isn't neutral: the challenges of state-based actors in transforming civil wars

One of the main reasons why peace agreements fail is because they exclude key actors who then oppose their implementation. Instead of laying the ground for a common future, such political settlements create the conditions for new conflict. Diplomatic practices, geared towards a state-based system, may inadvertently contribute to such illiberal peace processes. The keynote discusses trade-offs and challenges of the diplomacy of peacemaking in particular in the wider Horn of Africa.

Dr Gerrit Kurtz

Associate, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

Women's Participation in Contemporary Peace Processes

Research has shown that peace processes are more likely to lead to a durable peace if women participate in the negotiations. Countries in which women enjoy high levels of political participation, rights, and protection are less likely to experience armed conflict and more likely to build peace after civil war. Over the past decade, the UN Women, Peace, and Security agenda has advocated for and facilitated women's meaningful participation in peace processes. Yet, individual women representatives and women civil society groups continue to face serious participation challenges. Furthermore, the complexity of contemporary peace processes and the proliferation of armed actors often result in multi-year negotiations and repeat failure, which render women's participation ever more difficult. This keynote focuses on the different modes of women's participation and challenges in several contemporary peace processes, including Myanmar and South Sudan.

Prof Dr Jana Krause

Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo

11:00 hrs

Coffee break

11.30 HRS

PANEL 1

STATES AS PEACE BROKERS - BETWEEN GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS AND THE CLAIM TO NEUTRALITY

In recent years, many conflicts have gained a distinct geopolitical component, for instance, via the deployment of troops, arms deliveries, or financial support through third parties. Such a component reshapes conflict dynamics, potentially sways outcomes toward military victories, and may greatly influence negotiation stances. It also increasingly places neutral or indirectly involved states, particularly those in the Global South, under pressure to adeptly navigate their diplomatic relations and interests amid competing interests from Europe, the USA, China, and Russia. Simultaneously, this shift may offer countries of the Global South a potential chance to elevate their influence, perhaps even as intermediaries or “peace brokers” particularly in geopolitically charged conflicts.

The panel will explore, inter alia, conflict resolution in a multipolar world, the roles that states can play as peace brokers, considering both major geopolitical actors and countries of the Global South, as well as means and strategies for negotiation, trust building, and the establishment of reliable security guarantees.

Chair

Prof Dr Dominik Steiger

Academic Director of the Center for International Studies (ZIS), Technical University Dresden & Professor for International Law, European Law and Public Law, Technical University Dresden

H.E. Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed (*Online*)

Head of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, New York, USA

H.E. Ambassador Viktor Yengibaryan

Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Federal Republic of Germany

Barney Afako

Member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, Human Rights Council, Geneva, United Nations

Hager Ali

Research Fellow, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg, Germany

13:00 hrs

Lunch break

14.15 HRS

PANEL 2

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE SUCCESS OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Research shows a 64 per cent decrease in the likelihood of peace agreement failures when civil society is involved in the dialogue. Civil society actors play a crucial role in peace processes, enhancing both the effectiveness and legitimacy of negotiations. They tackle the root causes of violent conflicts, generate political and public pressure through campaigns and lobbying, represent the voices of the public and also of marginalized groups, and engage in documentation and monitoring activities. Thus, for successful peace processes it is imperative to determine who is involved, including respective roles, the stages of engagement, and the extent of participation.

This panel will delve into the ways civil society actors contribute to (commencing) peace processes and negotiations and promote sustainable peace. It will also explore strategies to enhance civil society organizations' collaboration with governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders.

Chair

Rafael Bohlen

Research & Programme Coordinator, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

Shamil Idriss

Chief Executive Officer of Search for Common Ground, Washington D.C., USA

Sandrine Diribe Mbeh

Founder of the Lights of Hope Africa, member of National Women's Convention for Peace in Cameroon, Cameroon

Dr Tetiana Kalenychenko (*online*)

Chief Executive Officer of the European Center for Strategic Analytics & Expert on the Role of Religion in Peace and Conflict, Ukraine

Martin Dexborg

Gender Adviser, Politico-Military Dimension, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Austria

15.45 hrs

Coffee break

16.15 HRS

INTERVIEW SESSION

AGAINST ALL ODDS – EXPERIENCES FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

How do diplomats successfully steer peace negotiations? This session explores methods to prepare effectively for negotiations, build trust among all parties, and ensure safeguarding of interests. It explores the transferability of experiences and best practices of negotiating peace in different conflicts, featuring insights from former chief negotiator, Dr Martin Kobler, on the triumphs and trials of diplomatic negotiation.

Chair

Nora Witt

Research and Programme Coordinator, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

Martin Kobler

Former German Ambassador and former Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Iraq, and DR Congo

followed by

Q&A

17:00 HRS

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

Chair

Dr Marcus Kaplan

Executive Director, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

Carolin Wonka

Sector Programme on Peace and Security, Disaster Risk Management, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

17:15 hrs

Farewell

19:00 HRS

EVENING EVENT AT FRAUENKIRCHE DRESDEN

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN WAR REPORTING

(see separate programme)

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