

Dear Reader,

When fighting ends and media attention is fading, time usually has come for reconstruction efforts. This does not only apply to physical infrastructures in war-torn societies but also, and perhaps more importantly, to their social and cultural institutions.

This year's **Berlin Summer Dialogue** looks beyond the headlines of the day and immediate humanitarian concerns in states of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Instead it focusses on viable long-term support that international actors could offer to sustainable peacebuilding in the region.

As always, this newsletter will provide information on other projects and topics as well. We wish you an interesting read!

Sarah Hinz,
Institute for Development and Peace (INEF)

Dr Mischa Hansel,
Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

UPCOMING EVENTS



: **Shifting powers and democratic accountability: The role of global investigative journalism**

**Tête-à-Tête at the Global Media Forum of Deutsche Welle
28 May, Bonn**

Our session will focus on transnational investigative collaborations and the way they expose hidden power structures and global 'shadow elites' (Wedel). What kind of tools and resources are needed to carry out such projects? Have recent investigations truly revealed something we did not know before? And does the public actually care about investigative stories? To address these questions, sef: organizes a tête-à-tête between anthropologist and political scientist Professor Janine Wedel, George Mason University, and Ilya Lozovsky, Managing Editor of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. **Take a look at the [programme!](#)**

Only registered participants of the **Global Media Forum** can attend the event.



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: Conflict Lines in the MENA Region – Opportunities and Risks for Reconstruction

**Berlin Summer Dialogue - Public Evening Event
18 June, Berlin**

In light of the many divisions and fault lines in the Middle East and North Africa, external actors are well-advised to carefully consider the impact that their engagement may have on the ground. How can both humanitarian assistance and external support for local reconstruction efforts contribute to structural conditions for sustainable peace? [Register now and join our debate!](#)



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: Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A Window of Opportunity? The Role of External Actors in the MENA-Region

**Berlin Summer Dialogue - Conference
18/19 June, Berlin**

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been convulsed by multiple wars and armed conflicts. Responding to this situation, the international community has understandably prioritized negotiations on ending violence and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In the long run, however, they need to do more to support post-conflict societies in their efforts to agree on a new and sustainable social contract.

This year's [Berlin Summer Dialogue](#) aims to bring together policy practitioners and civil society representatives to debate ways of international support for such efforts. To this purpose, participants are also asked to consider and take lessons from past reconstruction efforts. [Take a look at the programme here!](#)

"Opportunities as never before to interact with citizens"
Interview with Laura Chinchilla

As a former politician, what has been your own experience with social media in political campaigning?

My political campaign was the first one in my country to use social media. This was in 2009. So it was the first stage of social media being introduced in politics and at that time "Social media enabled me not only to communicate my message, but also to listen to the people."

I would say that there were more positive than negative effects. At the time, I felt it was very important to use social media to bring my message to more people than before. Social media enabled me not only to communicate my message, but also to listen to the people. It was a kind of two-way communication, providing us with the opportunity to interact with citizens as never before and to learn about their concerns and address them via our political platform. So in general terms, I would say that it was a very good experience. Of course, there were already fake news and insults from anonymous sources as well. But on balance, it was more of a positive experience than a negative one back then.

What are the risks of social media that have arisen since then?

Unfortunately, we have seen many kinds of risks arising from the use of social media. It is not social media itself that has to do with the way some people are using it. The most important risk, in my opinion, comes from fake news and disinformation, creating an aggressive environment around elections.

We have also seen in some elections, for example in Latin America and the United States, how some sources use social media to delegitimise the role of the electoral authorities. There have been attempts to suggest that elections were rigged if the result was not favourable to one specific candidate. So what we see is that social media is not only being used in a traditional way, for example to highlight the contrasts between candidate policies, but also to spread disinformation and discredit the electoral authorities.

What actions can the international community take to fight online disinformation and hate speech?

We have to recognise that this is an international problem which requires attention from the international community. We need to create awareness about the seriousness of misusing social media and its impacts. There are also really good experiences of how to neutralise the negative use of media. So international and regional organisations can collect these experiences and share them with different kinds of actors around the world. It is also important to promote recommendations on how to deal with this issue, for example through codes of conduct and principles that should inspire the regulations we are trying to implement.

:"Opportunities as never before to interact with citizens"

sef: insight 1|2019

At the **Dresden Forum for International Politics 2019**, sef: talked with Nanjala Nyabola, author and analyst based in Nairobi, about the advantages and challenges of social media in Kenyan society, how analogue politics can become fit for digital democracy and future challenges through social media platforms.

Read the interview in our **sef: insight 1|2019** or watch it online via our **YouTube Channel**.

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The Development and Peace Foundation (sef:) was founded in 1986 on the initiative of Willy Brandt. It is a cross-party and non-profitmaking organisation. sef: provides an international high-level forum for shared thinking on the complex challenges of globalisation. It is linked to the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) by a cooperation agreement. The aim of INEF's application-oriented research is to build bridges between theory and practice. It is one of three host institutions of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research.