

1 November 2013 / No. 122 - Documenting Human Rights Violations

Publisher:
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Editorial

After the end of an armed conflict or an authoritarian regime, dealing with a past overshadowed by serious human rights violations is one of the biggest challenges for societies. Lasting peace is only possible if this legacy is dealt with. Documenting the crimes that were committed is part of this long-lasting process. Documentation consists of different records including official state documents, audio and video recordings, letters, NGO documents, newspaper articles and testimonies. Documents that have been archived and made accessible enable truth finding and help victims of human rights violations to assert their right to truth, justice and reparation.

The present newsletter is dedicated to the topic of documenting human rights violations. The focus article explores archives of truth commissions and their role in dealing with the past. Various organisations report on their work on documenting human rights violations in Tunisia, Palestine or Papua in Indonesia. These articles point out that documenting human rights violations is a key aspect of human rights work and peacebuilding.

Lukas Krienbuehl
Editor

KOFF – swisspeace

Links

- [Archives & Dealing with the Past Project](#)
- [Rubli, S. and Jones, B. 2013. Archives for a Peaceful Future. swiss-peace Essential, 1|2013](#)
- [swisspeace: Dealing with the Past](#)
- [OTJR](#)

Latest Activities on Archives and Dealing with the Past

For over two years, swisspeace has been coordinating a joint project run by the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs (EDA), the Swiss Federal Archive and the Swiss Peace Foundation. During this year, the “Archives and Dealing with the Past Project” has provided support in a number of countries. Since early 2013, the project has been supporting an initiative by the Commission on Human Rights for the Philippines. The Commission is establishing an extensive archive to document human rights violations committed during the regime of Ferdinand Marcos. In addition to providing expert advice on dealing with the past, the project also finances the work of two Philippine archivists. They are collecting and cataloguing all relevant material from the armed forces, the police, ministries, NGO archives, state committees and universities. A partnership with the Argentinian Foreign Ministry in connection with this project led to fruitful exchanges between the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines and experts from Argentina, especially regarding the pioneering work of the Argentinian National Memory Archives.

In cooperation with the South African History Archive, a project was carried out for the International Criminal Court’s Trust Fund for Victims in the north of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Two local human rights organisations, which are gathering oral statements about the conflict in the Ituri region in order to use them in a memorial project, received technical and methodological advice related to archives. The Archives and Dealing with the Past Project is also playing an advisory role in a civil society dialogue project in the South Caucasus, in the setting up of an extensive archive of oral history projects in Northern Ireland and in the drafting process of an international protocol on documenting and investigating sexual crimes in armed conflicts.

Further information:
swisspeace
[Elisabeth Baumgartner](#)

In September, swisspeace held a side event on the subject of „Access to Truth Archives“ during the 24th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The related swisspeace Essential (1/2013) was presented to a wider public. The input by Pablo de Greiff, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, in particular gave rise to in-deep discussions among the high-ranking participants. Furthermore, swisspeace is carrying out a research project in cooperation with the Oxford Transitional Justice Research Group (OTJR) on “Ways of Knowing After Atrocities”. The project is intended to provide answers to the question of how human rights violations can be understood, documented and made more visible. It specifically promotes knowledge exchange between practitioners and researchers working on the methodological and conceptual challenges associated with transitional justice.

13.10.2013

Links

- [UN Peacemaker](#)
- [UN Guidance for Effective Mediation](#)
- [UNDPA Standby Team of Mediation Experts](#)
- [swisspeace: mediation](#)

Further information:
UNDPA
[Alice Chow](#)
swisspeace
[Matthias Siegfried](#)

swisspeace Supports 2nd UN High Level Mediation Course

It is well recognised that effective mediation efforts require good preparation. In particular, mediators and their teams must have a broad range of knowledge and skills in order to deal with the numerous challenges, dilemmas and complexities they are usually confronted with. The UN Secretary-General himself recommends in the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation that mediators and their teams should have the opportunity for training and coaching to help them to be most effective in their engagements.

Against this background, the Mediation Support Unit of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) organised the 2nd “UN High Level Mediation Course” in Istanbul in Turkey from 21 to 25 October. This was the second course after a successful first pilot training course for senior UN staff was organised in May 2013 in New York. The course aimed to deepen participants’ knowledge, enhance their mediation skills and provide a space for them to exchange experiences. The group of participants included senior UN staff as well as representatives from governments, civil society and regional organisations. The design of the programme was highly interactive, building on the participants’ vast experience in mediation. Through the role plays and simulations, participants had the opportunity to apply the tools discussed directly, further enhancing their skills. Meanwhile, the course benefited from the invaluable key note inputs by seasoned UN mediators present throughout the course. Mediation experts from swisspeace have closely cooperated with the UN in preparing, designing and conducting the two pilot courses.

While such training courses for senior mediators are important for professionalising the mediation field, they cannot be a stand-alone initiative. Among other things, UNDPA also maintains the peacemaker website that offers a wealth of resources related to mediation. And as one example on the operational side, with the stand-by team there is a group of experts who can be deployed rapidly whenever their expertise is needed.

25.10.2013

Focus

Links

- [Rubli, S. and Jones, B. 2013. Archives for a Peaceful Future. swisspeace Essential, 1|2013](#)
- [Peterson, T. H. 2005. Final Acts: A Guide to Preserving the Records of Truth Commissions. Washington/Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/The Johns Hopkins University Press](#)
- [swisspeace 2013. Conceptual Framework for Dealing with the Past. swisspeace Essential, 3|2013](#)
- [swisspeace: Dealing with the Past](#)
- [Archives and Dealing with the Past Project](#)

Uncovering the Truth with the Help of Truth Commission Archives

Archives documenting human rights violations play a key role in uncovering the truth in the aftermath of an armed conflict or a dictatorial regime and form an important part of a society's historical collective memory. This focus article deals with archives of truth commissions and examines where these archives are kept, how they are accessible to victims and their families and how they can contribute towards dealing with past violence.

During their work, truth commissions gather documents which reveal human rights violations: statements from victims and perpetrators, photographs, maps, reports by human rights organisations, government documentation and information from police stations, hospitals or cemeteries. All these records form the basis for a truth commission's work and its final report and hence are part of the legacy of the commission. Yet what happens to these records when the work of the commission has finished? Where are the archives kept? Are they accessible to victims and their families, researchers, law enforcement agencies or even the perpetrators themselves? How are they used in legal proceedings, museums, memorials, school textbooks or reparation programmes? Building on an original study by Trudy Huskamp Peterson, swisspeace examined these questions as part of a research project (Essential 1/2013), which provides the background for this article.

What Happens to Archives when a Truth Commission's Mandate is Completed?

Experiences from around 20 different countries have shown that, once a truth commission has completed its mandate, the archives are either transferred to the respective country's national archives, passed on to another state institution such as a human rights commission, or handed over to separate institutions established specifically for this purpose. In Timor-Leste, for example, a secretariat has now been set up in what was once a notorious prison in order to handle the truth commission archives. In Sierra Leone, on the other hand, the truth commission archives are stored in the former premises of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, with the intention of eventually housing them in a peace museum. Unfortunately, however, there are no funds available to build such a museum yet. After the end of a war or an authoritarian regime, choosing the permanent custodial institution for the truth commission's archives is particularly important. While national archives are traditionally responsible for all state records and ensure long-term preservation, the chosen institution also needs to be trusted by the general public and must not be associated with any human rights violations.

Sometimes the truth commission's mandate or final report stipulates what should be done with the archives. One such example is the final report of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which recommended that the database built up by the commission should be handed over to the National Archives of South Africa, which would also be responsible for managing and maintaining it. In many cases, however, there are no provisions of such kind. This often results in neglect

and in a lack of suitable places to store archives, strategies for accessing them and resources for their maintenance and further use. It is therefore important to address the issues of record management and archives right from the outset, before any information is collected. Even the law or decree calling for the establishment of a truth commission should set out the responsibilities and archival strategies and how access should be provided to the records. It is imperative to draw on the expertise of archivists in this process. Existing laws regarding access to archives, preservation, privacy and duration of confidentiality also need to be taken into account to avoid contradictory regulations.

Preservation of the Records and Providing Access to the Archives

When planning record management and archival strategies for truth commissions, it is particularly important to remember that institutions of this kind will be collecting a large amount of confidential and sensitive information. These records often contain details about victims, their families, perpetrators, physical and psychological harm and the crimes committed. The security and integrity of the individuals mentioned in the records, the protection of their privacy and the preservation of the material itself has to be guaranteed. Archives may come under threat not only from natural disasters, but also from alleged perpetrators.

From the perspective of society, it is extremely important to ensure that the archives remain accessible. Since the official final reports published by truth commissions present events in a condensed form, the archives contain important additional information. Having the opportunity to consult these archives therefore enables victims and their families to learn more about what happened. However, striking a balance between protecting sensitive information and providing access to truth commission archives is often a tricky task. Clearly formulated access regulations are rare and decisions regarding access vary from case to case. Sometimes there is a lack of archival expertise, as in the example of the truth commission archives in Timor-Leste, which has clearly defined access regulations but, in reality, access is granted or denied on a case by case basis. In addition to protecting sensitive information, access regulations therefore need to consider specific user groups, defining categories of accessible documents and how access requests should be dealt with.

Further Use of Truth Commission Archives

Truth commission archives are not just important sources of information for individuals. They are also useful for outreach programmes designed to convey a truth commission's findings and lessons to the general public and for other initiatives geared towards dealing with the past. These records can provide details about potential perpetrators and evidence for the prosecution and defence in court proceedings. They contain indications of who within the state machinery may have been responsible for human rights violations and therefore provide helpful information for vetting civil servants. Archives of this kind also offer information about victims and the suffering they have endured, for which they may be entitled to compensation under reparation programmes. The Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission, for example, elaborated a concept and criteria for individual and collective reparations. However, archives of truth commissions also offer useful material for memorialisation, memorials, teaching resources and historical research.

Further information:
swisspeace [Sandra Rubli](#)

In Peru, for instance, victims' photographs and testimonies collected by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have been incorporated into school textbooks.

The relevance of truth commission archives to other dealing with the past processes underlines the need for a holistic approach. Only by linking the various mechanisms will it be possible to ensure that human rights violations do not recur and the past does not repeat itself.

09.10.2013

News from Swiss NGOs

Links

- [TRIAL](#)
- [ACAT France](#)
- [Report by ACAT on torture in Tunisia \(in French\)](#)
- [Broadcasted interview in „Sahel plus“ on Voice of America \(in French\)](#)

Further information:
TRIAL [Chloé Bitton](#)

Supporting Tunisian Lawyers in the Fight against Torture

Since the flight of the former Tunisian president Ben Ali in January 2011, the Tunisian authorities have repeatedly stated that they want to tackle and eliminate the problem of torture in Tunisia, a symbol of the old Ben Ali regime. Three years later, the results of legal actions that have been taken are disappointing.

Complaints about torture are lodged but rarely investigated. Moreover, the few investigations that are carried out are often riddled with irregularities. For example, some complaints were investigated by the same police station about which the victims were complaining. In other cases the magistrates, who previously sanctioned the abuse in the first place by sentencing the accused, were in charge of the investigations. In most cases, investigations into accusations of torture were not taken seriously enough, nor were they carried out with sufficient diligence. Often the investigating judges failed to collect statements from witnesses or gather other evidence, either intentionally or through negligence.

To address these issues, ACAT France and TRIAL have launched a programme to support lawyers representing victims of torture. In November 2012, these organisations held an initial training session on documenting torture. At the end of the session, 16 files on victims of torture were handed over to the participating lawyers for further treatment. Through the programme, the lawyers also receive various kinds of support. As well as financial assistance, it provides legal and factual advice on how to consolidate complaints before national courts or, if these do not reach satisfactory legal verdicts, before the UN Committee against Torture (CAT). Political support is also provided through actively lobbying Tunisian authorities. The aim of this programme is to strengthen the position of victims and their legal representatives in the judicial process, during which they are currently often forced into playing a far too passive role by the public prosecutor's office.

21.10.2013

Links

- [cfd](#)
- [Information about the project](#)

cfd Project in Palestine: Giving a Voice to Women Affected by Discrimination

Palestine has a complex legal situation and a traditionalist society, which often resolves conflicts outside of state judicial authorities. These factors pose major problems for women who are fighting against violence and discrimination. They run the risk of being cast out by their families or subjected to further violence. Many

women are unaware that they can seek legal protection. It is left up to women's organisations to stand up for women's rights and work to raise awareness, as the general political situation in Palestine focuses predominantly on national interests and liberation from the Israeli occupation.

The Women's Studies Centre (WSC) in East Jerusalem and the Women's Affairs Centre (WAC) in Gaza have spent many years actively promoting respect for human and women's rights in Palestine. Since 2011, the feminist peace organisation cfd has been supporting this effort in a joint project designed to draw attention to the issue of violence against women by providing information and raising awareness. Both WSC and WAC want to push forward the implementation of the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Palestine. With this in mind, the two organisations are running training programmes on CEDAW, women's rights and preventing violence. These courses train both women and men, who then pass on their newly acquired knowledge in workshops. These workshops are increasingly becoming a forum for women affected by violence to talk about their experiences. They are keen to stress that it is often impossible for them to ask for legal aid. The testimonies given by these women are systematically documented and incorporated into a shadow report on CEDAW which is being compiled by Palestinian women's organisations. The aim of this is to enable women affected by discrimination and violence to get their voices heard by international political decision-makers.

Creating awareness of the fact that discriminated women can have a voice is an important step towards acknowledging the violence they have suffered. One distinctive aspect of the project is that WAC and WSC are working together across the cleavages between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. This cooperation represents an effort to counteract the physical, social and psychological fragmentation of the Palestinian society.

17.10.2013

Further information:
cfd [Regula Brunner](#)

Links

- [mission 21 project](#)
(in German)
- [Book by Dorina Waldmeyer](#) (in German)

Human Rights at Risk in Papua

Ever since Papua, situated on the western half of the island of New Guinea, was taken over by Indonesia in 1969, the Indonesian government has suppressed Papua's wish for greater self-determination with an iron fist, and asserts its own interests with no regard for the needs of the indigenous population. The Papuan people have become more and more marginalised, politically, economically, culturally and socially.

Papua is of great economical interest for Indonesia and international companies, because the region includes two of Indonesia's most resource-rich provinces. For example, the world's biggest goldmine is located in Papua. Nevertheless, the population is amongst the poorest in the world. About 70% of the indigenous population lives in complete isolation with very limited or no access to any infrastructure. No progress towards development has been made to date. Instead, land in Papua continues to be expropriated, or exploited and destroyed by legal and illegal activities such as logging, mining and plantations. If there is any revolt or

Further information:
mission 21
[Katharina Gfeller](#)
[Dorina Waldmeyer](#)

resistance by the indigenous Papuan population, the security forces respond with threats and human rights violations including assaults, rapes, arrests and killings. Critics of the government are regarded as separatists and are severely punished. The local press is strictly controlled by the government. International organisations and human rights organisations have been expelled from this region.

At one of the largest international conferences on Papua, which was held in Geneva in September and was organised by the International Coalition of Papua (ICP), Papua's isolation was the main topic of discussion. As a member of the ICP, mission 21 supports the work of the human rights office of the Evangelical Church in Papua, which documents human rights violations, publicly denounces them and monitors court cases. It informs the local population about their rights and victims are given psychological and spiritual support by trained pastors. In its non-violent efforts to promote peace and justice, mission 21's partner church works with other churches, leaders of other religious traditions and NGOs on an ecumenical, inter-faith basis.

18.10.2013

Links

- [HEKS](#)
- [HEKS: Human rights observers](#)
- [EAPPI](#)
- [Exhibition Human Rights Observers in Israel/Palestine Tell Their Stories](#)
- [Events](#)

Further information:
HEKS [Ruedi Lüscher](#)

Human Rights Observers in Israel/Palestine Tell Their Stories

Ten years ago, Swiss volunteers travelled to Israel/Palestine for the first time to observe the human rights situation in the area as participants of the ecumenical accompaniment programme (EAPPI). To mark this anniversary, HEKS and some former participants in the programme are organising an exhibition entitled "Zaungäste – Human Rights Observers in Israel/Palestine Tell Their Stories". It is about the very personal experiences of people who have been in the conflict zone for EAPPI.

The ecumenical accompaniment programme in Israel/Palestine was launched in 2002 by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and has had a permanent presence of about 30 volunteers at various locations in the West Bank ever since. The idea of EAPPI is to use the presence of international observers to generate publicity and prevent violence, to document human rights violations and, for the returning observers, to publically share their experiences in their home countries. Swiss volunteers have been taking part in the EAPPI programme since 2003.

HEKS, under the patronage of the Swiss Evangelical Church, is responsible for Swiss involvement in EAPPI and supports the Swiss volunteers with public awareness raising when they return. Peace Watch Switzerland is responsible for selecting, preparing and debriefing the volunteers.

HEKS and former observers have put together an exhibition of texts, photos and videos from their time with the programme. The impressive displays show what they achieved and what they did not, what they found moving, frustrating and motivating. The focus of the exhibition is not on politics but on the personal experiences of the people who dedicated three months of their lives to the programme.

23.10.2013

Links

- [16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women \(in German\)](#)

Further information:
cfd [Regula Brunner](#)

16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women 2013: Focus on Sexual Violence

Acts of armed violence and conflicts affect both men and women. However, women mainly experience violence where they expect something entirely different: in connection with love and sexuality. In fact, violence within partnerships and relationships is the most widespread form of violence against women. Worldwide, more than one in three women will experience domestic or sexual violence in their lives. These acts of violence are often explained away as an isolated phenomenon or a private matter. This is to ignore the social implications for children for example, who are also affected, the damage to physical and mental health and related costs. Indeed, violence against women is by no means a fringe phenomenon but a widespread, everyday breach of human rights.

Sexual violence is the focus of this year's campaign "16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women" which will run between 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Human rights organisations, trade unions, self-defence clubs and victim support centres will be providing information and will show what can be done against sexual violence.

17.10.2013

News from Swiss Government Agencies

Links

- [Dealing with the Past course](#)
- [FDFA](#)

Further information:
FDFA [Jonathan Wust](#)

Dealing with the Past Course

In September, the two-week Advanced Learning Course in Dealing with the Past was held for the fourth time in Oberhofen by Lake Thun. The *Task Force Dealing with the Past and Prevention of Atrocities* of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has been offering this course since 2010, in cooperation with swisspeace. 30 representatives of governments and civil society took part. Participants from Colombia, Tunisia and Kosovo for example who work on dealing with the past at various conflict stages were able to offer important comparisons based on their own experiences.

In the first week, the course focussed on developing a holistic approach to dealing with the past which gives priority to the right of victims and society to obtain reparation, in relation to the obligation of the state to investigate and punish past crimes. During the second week, the course focused on individual and collective aspects of the victim-perpetrator dynamic and the role of dealing with the past in conflict transformation. A key element was a detailed analysis of each particular national context, starting with the question of how dealing with the past could contribute to conflict transformation in a specific context. Participation in the course is by invitation only. The course is expected to take place again in 2014.

03.10.2013

Links

- [2013 Annual Development Cooperation Conference](#)
- [Project film on Egypt](#)
- [Project film on Honduras \(in French\)](#)
- [SDC: Engagement in fragile contexts](#)
- [SECO](#)

Further information:
SDC [Sabrina Würmli](#)

Annual Development Cooperation Conference: A Fragile World – Young People’s Perspectives

At this year’s Annual Development Cooperation Conference, organised by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), these governmental institutions gave an insight into their work in fragile states. Worldwide 1.5 billion people live in a fragile context. The conference focused on young people in fragile and conflict-affected environments and their perspectives. Alongside its work to fight poverty, the SDC is increasingly concentrating on reducing fragility and the causes of conflict. A great deal of progress has been made in fighting poverty, but the majority of fragile states have not yet reached any of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This shows that it is all the more important to carry out development work in difficult contexts.

One important element in tackling the causes of conflict is to offer young people in precarious situations better perspectives. The lack of prospects can contribute to the spiral of violence, for example when young people are recruited by armed groups. Development is barely possible in an environment marked by violence and insecurity. Project films on activities in Egypt and Honduras were used to show how unemployed young people are being offered concrete alternatives. These videos illustrated how measures to improve further education and reintegration programmes for former prisoners can help prevent violence.

A highlight of the conference was the address by John Kon Kelei, a former child soldier in the rebel group Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). He emphasised that combatting the uncontrolled spread of small arms plays a very important role in preventing violence. Today, Kon Kelei is a lawyer and works, among other things, on the reintegration of former child soldiers into society. 15.10.2013

Publications

Info

- [Bickford, L., P. Karam, H. Mneimneh and P. Pierce, 2009. Documenting Truth. New York: International Center for Transitional Justice](#)
- [Riaño-Alcalá, P. 2013. Remembering and Narrating Conflict. Resources for Doing Historical Memory Work. Bogota: Colombian Historical Memory Group](#)

Handbooks on Documenting Conflict and Human Rights Violations

In their publication “Documenting Truth”, the Documentation Affinity Group has drawn on the wealth of experience of its six member organisations that are involved in documenting human rights violations. It has gathered good practice and lessons to help other actors in this field. The authors’ aim is not to set rules for the documentation process, but rather to provide food for thought and encourage context-specific implementation of their approach. The publication includes recommendations about how documents can best be collected, analysed and stored. It deals with the usefulness of documentation and the strategic and technical challenges inherent in documentation projects, and addresses ethical, political and security-related issues.

In a global project, the Colombian Historical Memory Group has collected the assessments and experiences of users of its handbook “Remembering and Narrating Conflict”. This feedback was discussed at a conference in Vancouver, with the aim of making the handbook useful outside of Colombia as well. This handbook, which has been published in English, therefore goes into detail about the conceptual and

- [Reconstructing Historical Memory](#)

methodological aspects of documenting human rights violations. It pays particular attention to how people remember, tell or keep silent about the past and what effect this has for the victims of human rights violations. 16.10.2013

Web Tip

Info

- [Constitute Project](#)

Constitute Project – a New Digital Tool to Compare Constitutions

Every year, various countries revise their constitutions or write new ones. Constitutional processes can play a significant role in statebuilding and must be carried out with great care, particularly in regions affected by conflict or fragile situations. Therefore, the drafters of a new constitution should compare what they have written with the wording used in other constitutions. In the past, it has proved difficult to gain access to existing constitutions for the purposes of comparing their content and wording, either because these texts were not freely accessible or because linguistic barriers got in the way.

The Comparative Constitutions Project, run by the University of Texas and the University of Chicago, aims to provide free access to constitutional texts. The project's recently launched "Constitute" website features an interactive tool for comparing constitutions which claims to contain the written constitutions of virtually every independent state in the world. For ease of comparison, the project team has not only translated all the constitutions into English, but has also subdivided them by topic area. This means that all texts detailing the organisation of the electoral commission, for example, can be compared in a simple way. It is possible to download passages collected from various constitutions for further use under a "Creative Commons" Licence.

The website offers great benefits not only to people drafting constitutions but also to constitutional experts and non-governmental organisations, and is well worth a visit. 09.10.2013

International Partner Organisations

Info

News from ten international KOFF partner organisations.

- [Berghof Foundation](#)
- [CDA](#)
- [Conciliation Resources](#)
- [EPL0](#)
- [forumZFD](#)
- [FriEnt](#)
- [GIZ](#)

GIZ

- In the latest edition of its [magazine "akzente"](#), the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) explains why a secure environment is essential for sustainable development. The GIZ is increasingly working in countries affected by conflict and violence. In order to promote development, the causes of conflict, fragility and violence must be eliminated and the capacity of the people to deal with conflict without resorting to violence must be increased.

FriEnt

- The latest "[FriEnt -Impulse](#)" newsletter focuses on the risk of violence during elections. The leading article follows up the platform debate about the risks of elections. The article asks about the role of external actors in the election process and analyses how peace organisations could respond to the specific dilemmas associated with elections.

- [GPPAC Foundation](#)
- [International Alert](#)
- [Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung](#)

International Alert

- In a recent entry on his [personal blog](#), Chris Underwood, of [International Alert](#), analyses the implications of technological progress for documenting human rights violations. He shows how, in future, videos and live recordings could bring voices to a wider public that have been silent so far.

Events

Info

This section gives pointers to selected events related to civilian peacebuilding.

- swisspeace presents webinars on its study programmes [CAS in Civilian Peacebuilding](#) and [MAS in Peace and Conflict Transformation](#) which are offered in cooperation with the university of Basel. [Further information](#).
- As part of the [Sri Lanka Campaign](#), Amnesty International, the Society for Threatened Peoples and the Swiss Refugee Council are organising the showing of "[No Fire Zone: the Killing Fields of Sri Lanka](#)". This documentary film by Callum Macrae about alleged war crimes during the final months of the civil war in Sri Lanka will be screened for the first time in Zurich on Saturday 2 November at 14:00 in the Kino Riffraff.
- From 6 to 8 November, the Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) is organising a training course on "Preventing Natural Resource Conflicts". The UNEP consultant Oli Brown will show how access to, as well as the distribution and management of natural resources such as land, water or minerals often lead to conflicts. At the same time, responsible management of those resources can promote peace and contribute to reconstruction. [Further information](#) and [registration](#) (first come, first served).
- On 7 November the Society for Threatened Peoples (GfbV) and FAIRMED are holding a debate about the Baka pygmies and the responsibilities of the timber industry in the Congo Basin. The discussion between Hélène Aye Mondo of the Pygmy Organisation CADDAP, Tom van Loon of the Danzer Group, the medical anthropologist Susanna Hausmann Muela and Christoph Wiedmer of the GfbV will take place at 19:00 at Forum Altenberg in Bern.
- As part of Ukraine's chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the OSCE is holding an event in Vienna on 7 November about the action plan for improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. [Further information](#).
- On 9 November the Night of Religions will take place in Bern. Starting at 18:00 the capital's religious communities will be opening their doors to anyone who is interested and providing information about their faith. Events will take place at 22 venues in the city of Bern. [Further information](#).
- The Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS) will be hosting a conference on "Development and Culture in Central America" at the University of Bern on 15 November. Guests will include two young radio presenters from a project of HEKS in

Zacate Grande in Honduras. They are part of a group of young people who are using broadcasting as a means to raise awareness among the population about conflicts over land. [Further information](#).

- From 27 to 29 November, the Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) is organising a training course on “Managing Programmes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations”. During this course KOFF trainers Sidonia Gabriel and Nadina Diday will focus on how organisations can operate in a conflict-sensitive way in fragile contexts at both the strategic and operational level. [Further information](#) and [registration](#) by 6 November.
- The vernissage of the exhibition entitled “Zaungäste – Human Rights Observers in Israel/Palestine Tell Their Stories” will take place on 12 December at 19:00 at the Kunstraum Walcheturm in Zurich. On 14 December, former observers will be talking about their experiences, while on 15 December a recent film from Israel/Palestine will be shown. From 16 December onwards, the exhibition will be touring Switzerland and is available for interested event organisers. [Further information](#).
- In the [KOFF calendar](#) you can find more information about upcoming roundtables and events organised by KOFF.

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 The logo for swisspeace, with 'swiss' in a smaller, grey font above 'peace' in a larger, blue font.

Publication dates: The KOFF newsletter appears in German, English and French on the first day of every month (except August 1 and January 1). The newsletter is distributed electronically. All previously published editions are available on the KOFF [website](#) as PDFs. The keyword search engine provides direct access to all articles of the [online archive](#).

KOFF is a swisspeace programme. It is sponsored jointly by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the following Swiss NGOs:

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