

# Mediation and facilitation in peace processes

This month we bring you a summary of the new ISN Dossier on Mediation and Negotiation in Peace Processes. The dossier was formed in the context of the Mediation Support Project (MSP), a joint project of the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich and swisspeace, funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. The Mediation and Negotiation in Peace Processes dossier aims to create a dynamic website on mediation and negotiation in peace processes.

## 1.1 Mediation and facilitation in peace processes

Mediation and negotiation fall within the broad notion of 'Conflict Management' to mean any attempt to solve the destructive incompatibility between two or more groups, transform their relationship or change the dynamics which have precipitated the conflict. Beyond Intractability notes that conflict management is a component of peacebuilding, which the OECD calls "a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of lasting and sustainable peace." Conflict management efforts, including mediation and negotiation, can be used at every stage of a conflict.

Mediation and facilitation involves a third party who is accepted by the conflict parties, aiming to support them in dealing constructively with the conflict. Jacob Bercovitch, a leading expert in international conflict mediation, writes that "mediation offers the possibility of a jointly acceptable outcome without giving in on one's core values and beliefs." Mediation, he goes on, with a suitable mediator and under the right conditions can help to "transform an intractable conflict and produce a sustained agreement." A skilled mediator helps to structure and guide the process of finding a peaceful solution between the parties to the conflict – in some cases a process which takes years while the conflict continuously evolves. Frequently, a key marker of a successful mediator is the prominence a particular person or representative of a government brings to the process, for example, the role of former South African president Nelson Mandela in mediating the Arusha Peace Agreement between the central government and various rebel forces in Burundi. Burundi, the BBC reports, "has been the scene of one of Africa's most intractable conflicts," yet "stability appears to be within reach after years of bloody conflict" which can be "attributed partly to international mediation and support." The Uppsala Conflict Database, which tracks all conflicts with over 25 battle related deaths in a calendar year, reports the involvement of Mandela as the chief mediator in the conflict starting in late 1999.

The opening paragraph of the editorial to the Mediation and Negotiation in Peace Processes dossier highlights the shift in mentality that a mediator can assist with: John Garang, former chairman of the

Sudanese People's Liberation Army, once argued that the National Islamic Front regime in North Sudan "could not be reformed, that they were too deformed to be reformed and must therefore be removed not improved," yet Garang later negotiated and signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with this same regime, and formed a joint government with his previous opponents.

## **1.2 Issues related to mediation and facilitation**

An analysis of any mediation experience - current or past - will reveal a range of overlapping topics and issues. One of these has been the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which functions as a "court of last resort" to bring to justice to "persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes." When the president of the International Criminal Court, Judge Philippe Kirsch, stated that one of the long-term objectives of the court was to "establish a truly global reach in the fight against impunity" he highlighted an additional challenge the ICC created for those seeking to mediate and negotiate between groups. On the one hand, granting amnesties for war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide was no longer an option for enticing armed group to come to the negotiation table. On the other hand, the ICC created a clear framework in which mediators can work in, delegating the question of amnesty to the ICC. The issue was highlighted in the peace negotiations between the Lord's Resistance Army and the government of Uganda, as ISN Security Watch reported in late August 2006. Other issues include security sector reform, the impact of small arms and light weapons in relation to a peace process and the creation and composition of peace support operations. Additionally, wealth sharing, governance structures, power sharing arrangements, transitional justice, forced migration, gender and public participation are covered.

Ryan Cross  
Mediation Support Project  
Centre for Security Studies (ETH Zurich)

## **1.3 DATABASES**

Uppsala Conflict Database, by the Uppsala University, Sweden  
This website provides a database on armed conflicts around the world. The project records all armed conflicts between 1989 and today, containing variables such as conflict onset, conflict intensity, parties and peace agreements.

## **1.4 INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

UN Peacemaker (Site requires registration)

UN Peacemaker is a web-based operational support tool for international peacemaking professionals. It is part of the overall effort of the UN's Department of Political Affairs to reinforce its capacity to provide advice and support to the UN secretary-general and his representatives in their efforts to resolve international disputes and internal conflicts. The website provides information on peace agreements and peacemaking mandates and resources.

#### UN Department of Political Affairs

This website offers information on the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), its functions and current focus. The DPA plays a central role in monitoring and assessing global political developments, advising the UN secretary-general on actions that could advance the cause of peace, providing support and guidance to UN peace envoys and political missions in the field, and serving member states directly through electoral assistance and through the support of DPA staff to the work of the Security Council and other UN bodies. In carrying out these and other core functions, DPA contributes to UN efforts worldwide that span the spectrum from conflict prevention to peacemaking to post-conflict peace building.

#### OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre

The Conflict Prevention Centre provides direct support to all OSCE field operations, helping them fulfill their tasks in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Moreover, its liaison function between OSCE field operations and the main OSCE negotiating bodies guarantees the full implementation and execution of the Organization's political decisions. It also co-ordinates all activities in mission areas carried out with other OSCE institutions and relevant international and sub-regional organizations. Additionally, the website offers an overview of the organization and its activities, and provides access to documents and publications.

#### United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

The UN Peacebuilding Commission marshals resources at the disposal of the international community to advise and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery, focusing attention on reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development in countries emerging from conflict. The commission aims to bring together the UN's broad capacities and experience in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development. The website makes available original documents, resolutions and statements.

#### United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

This is the official website of the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The site provides information, including original documents and background information, on the department's activities and all current and past UN peacekeeping operations. The site also offers a peacekeeping timeline, glossary, photo gallery, statistics and a collection of general and peacekeeping deployment maps. Site also in Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.

### **1.5 RESEARCH AND ACADEMIA AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

#### Conflict Research Consortium, by the University of Colorado, Boulder, US

This website serves as a gateway to the websites of the University of Colorado's Conflict Research Consortium. It is a multi-disciplinary knowledge portal for research and information about conflict and its transformation, with a particular focus on difficult and intractable conflicts.

#### Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD)

ACORD is an Africa-led international alliance working to promote social justice. The agency works

across Africa and links citizens and their organizations at grass roots level to national, sub-regional, pan-African and global issues and actions. The website provides information on ACORD's community-based development programs.

Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation, Ottawa

The Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation (CIAN) is dedicated to the prevention and resolution of destructive conflict and to building sustainable peace at local, national and international levels. Its website offers information on its domestic and international programs and an early response unit.

swisspeace, Bern, Switzerland

swisspeace is an action-oriented research institute in the area of conflict analysis and peacebuilding. It researches the causes of wars and violent conflicts, develop tools for early recognition of tensions, and formulate conflict mitigation and peacebuilding strategies. This website provides publications and news, as well as information on swisspeace's activities.

United States Institute for Peace, Washington

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, non-partisan, national institution established and funded by the US Congress. Its mission is to help prevent and resolve violent international conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and democratic transformations, and increase peacebuilding capacity, tools and intellectual capital worldwide. The USIP website provides information on the institute's activities, events, publications and original documents. The site also features a specialist directory.

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, by International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Norway

The Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding program (CRP) encompasses research, training and education, policy development and the promotion of peace efforts around the world. The program's theme has a broad definition and includes questions of conflict prevention and early warning, mediation and efforts to reach settlements, and sustaining peace through political and economic development, disarmament, military reform and reconciliation. The CRP program seeks to integrate the different kinds of work done within it and to develop linkages and synergy between analysis, training, policy and operational activities.

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, Switzerland

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (hd) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of humanitarian principles, the prevention of conflict and the alleviation of its effects through dialogue. The center is active in a number of conflict resolution projects around the world, promoting and facilitating dialogue among belligerents. In support of these projects it conducts research and analysis bringing forward practical policy recommendations to improve international efforts to secure and sustain peace. The website offers publications as well as information on projects and activities.

European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), The Hague, Netherlands

The European Centre for Conflict Prevention is a non-governmental organization that promotes effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies, and actively supports and connects

people working for peace worldwide. Its website provides information on the organization's activities as well as a database containing surveys, articles, an organization directory and publications.

Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (BFPS), Berlin, Germany

The Berghof Foundation for Peace Support promotes systemic approaches to prevent and transform violent conflicts and supports peace processes through enhancing networks of internal and external organizations and initiatives. The website provides background material on peace support and updates on the foundation's projects.

Conciliation Resources, London, UK

Conciliation Resources (CR) is an international service for conflict prevention and resolution. It provides practical and sustained assistance to people and groups in areas of armed conflict or potential violence. The website offers information on programs, activities and publications.

Human Security Gateway, Vancouver, Canada

The Human Security Gateway is a rapidly expanding searchable online database of human security-related resources including reports, journal articles, news items and fact sheets. It is designed to make human security-related research more accessible to the policy and research communities, the media, educators and the interested public.

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Durban, South Africa

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is an international civil society organization working throughout Africa to bring African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. The site offers information on ACCORD programs, news and publications, as well as access to the Conflict Trends Magazine.

Bonn International Centre for Conversation, Germany

The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment and financial and economic resources can be shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses. The website is also available in German.

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg, South Africa

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVSR) is a multi-disciplinary South African organization established in 1989. It is dedicated to supporting peaceful and fundamental transformation in southern Africa. CSVSR's mission is to develop and implement innovative and integrated human security interventions based upon a commitment to social justice and fundamental rights for people who are vulnerable or excluded. The website provides information on center's publications and activities.

International Conflict Research (INCORE), by the University of Ulster, Londonderry, UK

The INCORE project addresses the causes and consequences of conflict in Northern Ireland and internationally, and promotes international conflict resolution management strategies. The website offers information on research, courses and events. It also provides access to online services, such as

the Ethnic Conflict Research Digest, the Conflict Data Service and a social and political issues archive on the Northern Ireland conflict.

#### Conflict Prevention Partnership

The Conflict Prevention Partnership is a cooperative effort by the International Crisis Group, International Alert, the European Policy Centre and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, whose aim is to work to prevent conflicts worldwide by helping improve the European Union's conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding capacities.