



## **Human Security Division HSD**

Final report on the implementation  
of the Dispatch on Switzerland's  
International Cooperation  
2017–20

HSD Annex

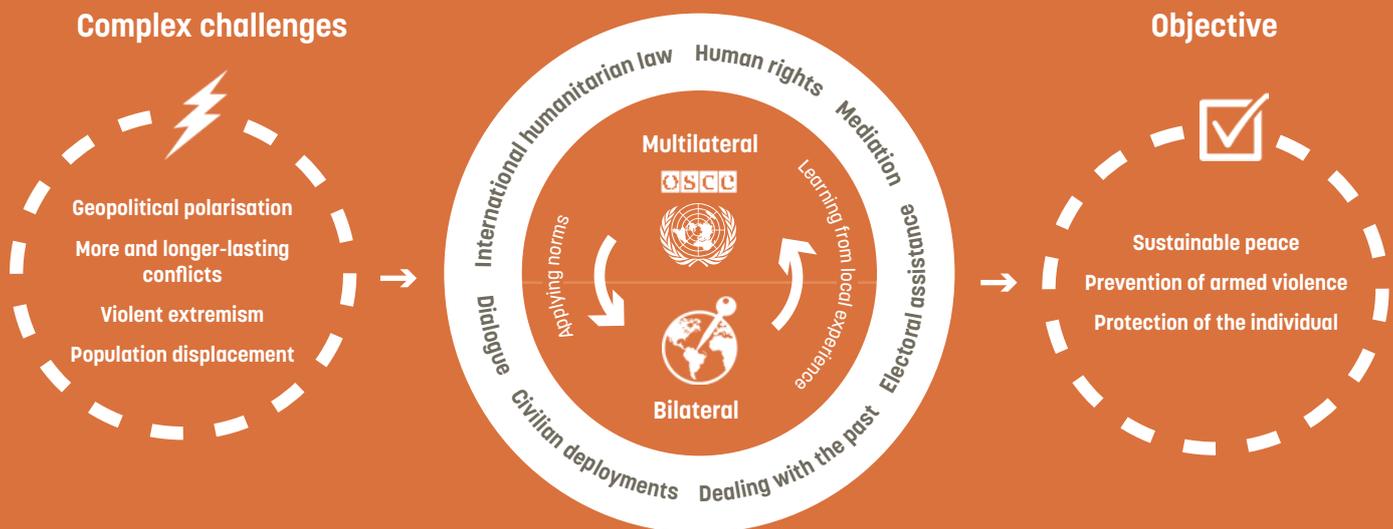


Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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# Human Security Division

The HSD is an active advocate for peace, respect for human rights and the protection of the individual. This combination, based on the Federal Act on Civil Peace Promotion Measures and the Strengthening of Human Rights, is effective and serves as an example to other countries.



## 2016 – 19 results at a glance:

- ▶ **17 peace processes prepared and supported** (including Syria, Colombia and Mozambique).
- ▶ **Ceasefire negotiations supported in 6 countries** (including Myanmar and Colombia).
- ▶ **Annual human rights dialogues conducted with 8 countries** (including China).
- ▶ **18 successful diplomatic initiatives launched** (e.g. the Appeal of 13 June initiating closer cooperation between the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Security Council in conflict prevention).

## Deployment of civilian experts in 2016 – 19:

Around **170 experts** were deployed each year in over **35 countries**, **42 percent** of them women.

### For example: Nina Burri

The International Criminal Court in The Hague investigates, and tries individuals charged with, international crimes. Nina Burri works for the court as an assistant prosecutor tasked with investigating these crimes.

### For example: Olivier Rod

The UN peacekeeping operation in Mali supports the government in implementing the peace agreement. Swiss police officer Olivier Rod takes part in patrols in Mopti Region and discusses the situation with local people. The UN presence on the ground and the training of police officers helps to keep the population safe from rebel attacks.

### For example: André Loersch

André Loersch is deployed on the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Since the outbreak of the conflict, the OSCE mission has been tasked with reporting on the security situation, defusing tensions within the country and promoting respect for human rights.

## Strengthening human rights, preventing violent conflict



The HSD promotes respect for human rights as a means of conflict prevention. Non-state actors, whether non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or transnational companies, play an increasingly important role in this endeavour. Championing human rights is not only an obligation under international law but is also in Switzerland's interests, for where human rights are violated, there can be no long-term peace, security or prosperity.

### Business and human rights: guidance on commodity trading

«With more and more consumers demanding responsible supply chains, businesses and NGOs joined forces with the federal government and the cantons to develop guidance on reducing human rights abuses», says Stéphane Graber, Secretary General of the Swiss Trading & Shipping Association (STSA). This guidance helps companies to identify where there is a risk of human rights violations in the purchase, sale, transport, storage and processing of commodities, and to take appropriate action. In this way, large commodity traders such as Mercuria and SMEs like Ecom Agroindustrial can prevent human rights violations as well as damage to their own reputations.

### Every dialogue is a human rights dialogue

Switzerland conducts dialogues on human rights issues with a number of countries. The bilateral human rights dialogue with China, begun in 1991, provides a platform for discussing even contentious subjects such as minority rights and the death penalty. An exchange of experts helped to bring about a number of improvements in detention conditions in Chinese prisons. In addition to its bilateral contacts, Switzerland reports regularly to the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in China, expressing its concerns regarding restrictions on the freedom of religion, expression and movement of ethnic and religious minorities. For Swiss human rights policy to have an impact on China, this combination of multilateral and bilateral engagement is crucial. Human rights issues need to be addressed consistently and coherently at all political levels.

### Teaming up for human rights in sport

While major sporting events such as football World Cups and the Olympics bring nations together in a positive way, the working conditions of the (mostly foreign) workers employed on major construction projects in the host countries often come in for criticism. An HSD initiative led to the establishment of a Centre for Sport and Human Rights in Geneva in 2019. In Qatar, the collective efforts of governments, the private sector, FIFA, international organisations and civil society brought about improvements in working conditions.



As a result, the more than 36,000 migrant workers building infrastructure for the 2022 FIFA World Cup now enjoy greater protection and higher minimum wages.

### External view

#### HSD strengthened children's rights in Senegal

Upholding human rights in the penal system can help to counteract radicalisation, particularly among children and young people.

► **Main finding of the evaluation (see QR code):** Targeted training of judges, social workers, prison staff and police officers on children's rights has had a positive impact on youth justice.

► **Unique approach:** Promotion of interdisciplinary cooperation within the youth justice system.

► **Significant outcomes at three levels:** Enhanced expertise on youth justice in Senegal.

Children's rights better safeguarded through closer cooperation.

Switzerland recognised as an important partner in the promotion of children's and human rights.



### Challenges

#### Opportunities and risks of digitalisation

Digitalisation allows information to be disseminated quickly and widely, while the use of artificial intelligence opens up new opportunities. However, the rise of digital technology has also facilitated censorship, bullying and the propagation of hate speech. The risks in terms of equality, non-discrimination, privacy and freedom of expression are considerable. The HSD is therefore working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop ways of promoting the responsible use of new technologies.

## Facilitating and sustaining peace



The HSD brings the parties to a conflict to the table, supports them and provides specialist expertise. Switzerland's history, expertise and political system make it ideally qualified to promote peace.

### Syria

The Syrian conflict has cost the lives of more than 500,000 civilians since 2011 and displaced some twelve million people. The HSD has been working at three levels to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. It supported the UN peace process in Geneva in direct cooperation with the UN special envoy, fostered peaceful coexistence on the ground, and promoted efforts to document war crimes and serious human rights violations and to address the past.

An HSD expert helped the UN to ascertain the fate of some 100,000 to 200,000 missing persons. In late 2018 and early 2019, some initial prisoner exchanges took place.

«During my mandate, Switzerland and the Human Security Division have been a reliable key partner for my mission. Through our close-knit cooperation on civil society inclusion – to name just one example – we have enabled all segments of the Syrian society to have a voice when it comes to the future of Syria. This key work could not have been done by one of the regional or big powers involved in Syria. It requires the trust of Syrians and a sensibility for inclusion and public participation that Switzerland perfectly embodies.»

Staffan de Mistura, UN Special Envoy for Syria 2014–2018

### Ukraine

The past five years have seen the return of armed conflict to Europe, with little prospect of a resolution in the near future. The HSD-endorsed OSCE Coordinator of the Humanitarian Working Group in the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk has been grappling with the parties in a bid to make progress on the most pressing humanitarian challenges in the conflict-affected areas. Among other things, he has insisted on better and safer arrangements for civilians wanting to cross the line of contact between the government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of eastern Ukraine. Around a million such crossings take place each month. In late 2017, he contributed significantly to the release and exchange of more than 300 prisoners. Between 2017 and 2019, the HSD seconded an adviser to the Ukrainian Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons. This Swiss expert became one of the minister's closest advisers, working directly on government strategies and programmes and supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding projects run by the ministry.

### External view

**Evaluation: 12 years of helping Colombia deal with its past (see QR code)**

#### General findings

- ▶ **Value for money:** Comprehensive work done to a high standard with limited resources.
- ▶ **Unique approach:** A combination of professional expertise and diplomacy.
- ▶ **Sustainability:** The HSD's work, with the army for example, has helped to embed the process of dealing with the past in Colombia.
- ▶ **Recommendation:** The HSD's withdrawal would constitute a risk. Transitional justice requires international supervision by countries such as Switzerland.

#### Significant outcomes at four levels

- ▶ Efforts to deal with the past are backed by the Colombian population.
- ▶ A National Centre for Historical Memory has been established.
- ▶ The army has assimilated the issue.
- ▶ Dealing with the past is included in the peace agreement.



### Mozambique

Mozambique has been embroiled in an on-and-off civil war since it gained its independence in 1975. In August 2019, the government and the armed opposition, RENAMO, signed a comprehensive peace agreement. Switzerland closely supervised the negotiations leading up to the agreement, as part of which the HSD sent mediation experts to Mozambique and advised on solutions concerning decentralisation and demilitarisation. However, the signing of the peace agreement is just the first step on the road to a lasting peace. Switzerland will continue to assist Mozambique, especially in the area of demilitarisation and reintegration of ex-combatants.

### Preventing election violence: Zimbabwe and Nigeria

Elections may mark the start of a peaceful transition process but they can also trigger violence. In Zimbabwe in 2018, the HSD was asked by national actors to support negotiations between the political parties, which led to the adoption of an electoral code of conduct. The 2018 election campaign was heralded as the freest and most peaceful in the country's history. In 2019, the HSD worked with a collective of statesmen, traditional leaders and citizens in Nigeria. The resulting Abuja Peace Agreement helped to reduce violence during the presidential election in February 2019.

### Challenges

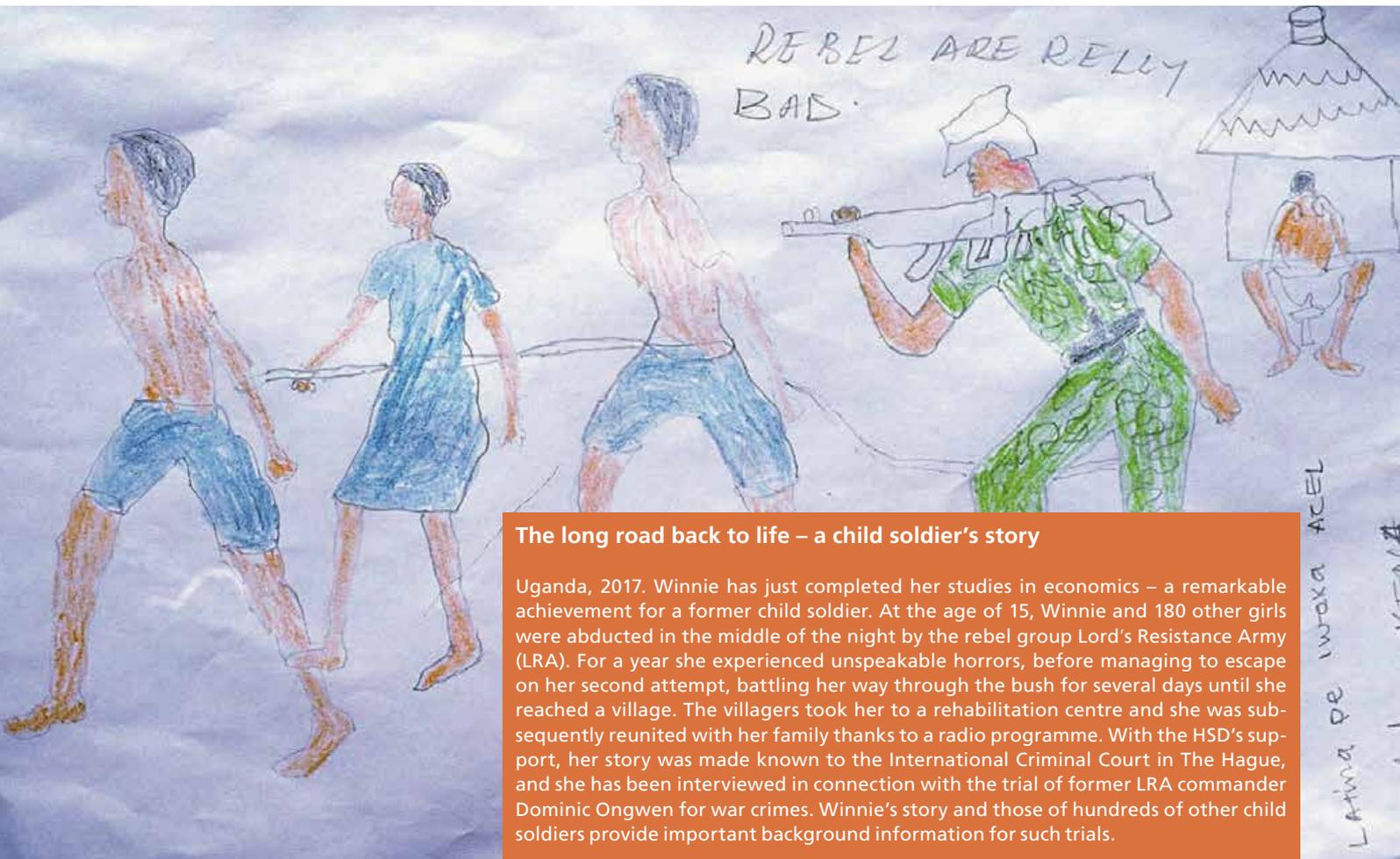
#### Increasing complexity

Armed conflicts are lasting longer and involving new, and growing numbers of, parties. This makes resolving them a more complex task. Thanks to specialists on the ground, and its willingness to enter into dialogue with all warring parties, the HSD is able to respond swiftly to change. However, lasting peace means much more than a halt to hostilities. The HSD therefore has to be increasingly willing to support peace processes in the long term.

## Protecting people from armed violence



Civilians – women, men and children – now account for up to 80 percent of the victims of armed conflict. The HSD seeks to safeguard the civilian population by diplomatic means. Concrete action to enforce international humanitarian law, protect people from armed violence and promote humanitarian interests in disarmament processes has a preventive effect.



### The long road back to life – a child soldier's story

Uganda, 2017. Winnie has just completed her studies in economics – a remarkable achievement for a former child soldier. At the age of 15, Winnie and 180 other girls were abducted in the middle of the night by the rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). For a year she experienced unspeakable horrors, before managing to escape on her second attempt, battling her way through the bush for several days until she reached a village. The villagers took her to a rehabilitation centre and she was subsequently reunited with her family thanks to a radio programme. With the HSD's support, her story was made known to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and she has been interviewed in connection with the trial of former LRA commander Dominic Ongwen for war crimes. Winnie's story and those of hundreds of other child soldiers provide important background information for such trials.

### Protection for medical personnel

The provision of medical care to the sick and injured, including fighters on the opposing side, is a cornerstone of international humanitarian law. As important as they are, some counterterrorism measures criminalise medical assistance on the grounds that it supports terrorism. For example, following the retaking of Mosul in northern Iraq, Anna, a doctor in the city, was charged with providing medical assistance during the IS occupation. The HSD advocated a fact-based discussion of this moral quandary and the development of solutions not only with governments but also between humanitarian organisations and counterterrorism actors.

### Ammunition safety: the UN follows Switzerland's lead

Stockpiled government ammunition that falls into the hands of armed groups can destabilise entire regions. In 2015, the HSD launched an initiative to prevent explosions in ammunition depots and to stop ammunition from ending up in the wrong hands. The UN adopted a resolution on this issue in 2017. The HSD also supported the creation of a Geneva-based international coordination platform which deploys experts and helps to develop national strategies for safe and secure ammunition management. Through its work on ammunition safety, Switzerland plays a leading role in supporting the UN Secretary-General's agenda in this area.

### Challenges

#### Mines in cities and densely populated areas

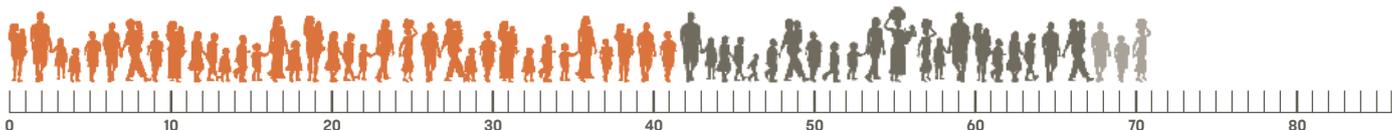
Despite the great headway made in recent decades, humanitarian mine clearance now faces some complex challenges. Since 2014, casualty numbers have been climbing again (from 3,993 victims in 2014 to 9,437 in 2016), with most of those affected being civilians. This is a matter of grave concern. The rise is driven by the use of anti-personnel mines by armed groups, increasingly in urban areas. This makes it all the more important that such groups know about and comply with the ban on anti-personnel mines.

# Better management of migration and displacement



Irregular migration and refugee movements endanger the stability of countries and entire regions as well as the safety of migrants themselves. In the absence of any regulation, migrants may become victims of human trafficking, die at border fences, in internment camps or while trying to cross the Mediterranean. Organised crime profits and state structures are destabilised.

**70.7 million** people forcibly displaced worldwide



**41.3 million**  
displaced in their own countries

**25.9 million**  
refugees

**3.5 million**  
asylum seekers

### Sustainable solutions for displaced persons

Worldwide, by far the largest group of people forced to flee their homes are those displaced within their own country. Depending on the circumstances, such internally displaced persons (IDPs) may later end up as refugees or migrants. Though often among the most vulnerable groups in society, they receive little attention, with concerns for national sovereignty being a primary reason. At the UN, the HSD helped to put IDPs in the political and operational spotlight and was involved in establishing a high-level panel on the issue. Sustainable development in these countries is only possible if the living conditions of millions of IDPs are improved.

### Finding missing persons

Registered cases of missing persons doubled between 2016 and 2018. As migration increases, so too do the challenges involved in finding missing people and informing their loved ones. Many have disappeared without

trace, become victims of human trafficking, enslavement and other crimes, or drowned in the Mediterranean. The uncertainty is extremely traumatic for relatives and can have consequences that threaten their livelihoods. The HSD assists countries in the Mediterranean region to fulfil their obligations under international law, in keeping with the comprehensive and partnership-based approach of Switzerland's foreign policy on migration. At the same time, the HSD is working with the International Committee of the Red Cross to establish universal standards for all missing persons (in relation to tracing and forensics, for example).

### Preventing human trafficking

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), around 40.3 million people worldwide were victims of modern slavery in 2019. The vast profits generated fuel armed conflict in places such as Libya as well as funding violent extremism. The HSD is actively engaged in the prevention of human trafficking.

In Nigeria, this takes place in collaboration with traditional and religious authority figures, who educate their communities about the dangers of human trafficking; in Mali, the HSD builds the capacity of the UN mission to identify cases of human trafficking, and in multi-lateral organisations it helps consolidate the political and legal basis underpinning effective action to combat human trafficking.

### Challenges

#### Mixed migration movements

Millions of people migrate within and between countries and regions, whether fleeing conflict, human rights abuses or natural disasters, or in search of better economic prospects. These movements are increasingly complex, with people using the same migration routes for a variety of reasons and being exposed to the same dangers. The traditional distinction between refugees, irregular and regular migrants is therefore becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. Effective migration policies must address this challenge by focusing on the push factors driving migration and on protecting the rights of the people concerned, regardless of their status.



# Lessons learnt and outlook

Efforts to promote peace and security have gained in importance in recent years and will continue to do so. The challenges are many and varied and there is growing pressure to find quick-fix solutions in conflict situations. Meanwhile, sustainable conflict resolution, through the transformation of societies and the fostering of peaceful co-existence, is neglected. Internationalised proxy wars are once again a frequent occurrence. Conflicts are lasting longer and becoming more complex. Violent internal conflicts are on the rise and are increasingly being played out in towns and cities, bringing misery to civilian populations. The number of people displaced as a result of human rights violations, poverty, natural disasters and climate change shows no signs of falling. International law, human rights and international humanitarian law are being flouted with growing regularity, or even actively undermined.

For the sake of its own security and prosperity, Switzerland continues to rely on a functioning international order and peaceful coexistence. The HSD can help shape responses to global challenges and contribute to peace, stability and prosperity. It is an international leader in the promotion of peace and security. Indeed, other countries are increasingly investing in similar activities, which confirms the validity of the HSD's work.

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## The HSD's experiences over the past four years show that:

- ▶ Successful peace policy requires acceptance by all parties to a conflict. The access that the HSD enjoys is often the result of years spent fostering trust.
- ▶ Conflicts and crises remain difficult to predict. The HSD must maintain the agility it needs to respond quickly to challenges and opportunities. At the same time, it has to be prepared to support peace processes on a long-term basis where necessary, in order to secure lasting peace.
- ▶ Effective peacebuilding starts at the local level. The HSD is ideally suited to this bottom-up work.
- ▶ The HSD's tried-and-tested expertise in areas such as cease-fire negotiations, prevention of violent extremism and dealing with the past must be preserved and also adapted to changing needs.
- ▶ Respect for human rights helps to prevent conflict and provides an early warning indicator of the potential for conflict within a society.
- ▶ The HSD can achieve greater impact on human rights issues by working with the private sector.
- ▶ The HSD's expertise in drawing up a pre-election code of conduct has proved effective and can be deployed at short notice; this instrument should be expanded.
- ▶ The number of civilian casualties in armed conflicts is rising again. The HSD will continue its efforts to protect the civilian population, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by new technologies and seeking ways to persuade all parties to a conflict to comply with international humanitarian law.

### **Publication details**

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