ALL CONFLICTS CAN BE RESOLVED

THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE (CMI) is an independent Finnish organisation that works to prevent and resolve violent political conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari founded CMI in 2000. Since then, CMI has grown to become one of the leaders of its field.

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CMI works to prevent and resolve violent political conflicts. We aim to achieve this through facilitating dialogue, mediating between conflicting sides, providing capacity-building and mediation support at different stages of peace processes — using our expertise to support the broader peacemaking community.

We focus on making meaningful contributions to peace processes in four regions – Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Eurasia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

**KEY NUMBERS 2019**

- 9.3 million euros total funding
- 89 staff members
- 9 peace processes in 10 countries
- 12 dialogue platforms
- 19 projects worldwide

- 230+ workshops or dialogue meetings
- 730 meetings with conflict stakeholders
- 1480 meetings with international peers

- 6500+ direct beneficiaries in conflict areas
- 36000 people engaged in CMI events
- 41% women (avg. across programme activities)

- 24 contributions to peace
- Better peacemakers
- Better peace processes
- Better ways of building peace

- 87 requests for CMI’s engagement
The COVID-19 crisis is as global as it gets and so the solutions need to be global. This is why I remain optimistic that the crisis will actually strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation.

“It turns out that the world, for all of its imperfections, is in a much better state than we might think. But when we worry about everything all the time instead of embracing a world view based on facts, we can lose our ability to focus on the things that threaten us the most.”

- Hans Rosling 2018

Every time there is a serious crisis I take a deep breath and re-read these wise words of the physician Hans Rosling. It’s the eternal optimist in me. I want to find a silver lining, and often I do.

In early 2020 I often wondered what Rosling, who passed away in 2017, would have said about Covid-19. I assume he would have dug up many facts and compared the mortality rates of global pandemics.

He would have most probably reminded us that the Spanish Flu killed an estimated 17 – 100 million people between 1918 and 1920. He would have also reminded us that we are now better and faster in coming up with vaccines than ever before.

In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity, as Albert Einstein used to say. And I believe he is right. There has been abundant analyses of the economic and political implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. As always, some of it spot on, others completely over the top.

We often have a tendency to overrationalise the past, overdramatise the present and underestimate the future. At CMI we try to take a long-term view and assess the local, national and global implications of any given crisis. We look at past experience, but realise that every situation is different. The same goes for Covid-19.

Locally, it is changing many things. In some cases, it has brought families and communities closer together. No matter where you are from, it has forced us to reflect on things that are important in life. In some cases it has been about saving lives, in others about caring for strangers or those close to you.

Most of us miss the human touch. We realise how much we need each other, even in the age of technology. It might be that artificial intelligence and robotisation are doing the more mundane things in our lives, but there is one thing, above all, that only we humans can provide: empathy. This is important in every situation, conflicts included.

Nationally, many countries were caught by surprise when the pandemic hit. They were simply not ready. Protective gear, medical staff and general infrastructure were simply not there. We can only hope that most states will learn from such mistakes. With preparation you have half the job done.

Many countries opted for insularity in the early stages of the crisis. This is understandable. There is an urgency to protect your own. As the pandemic progressed, the language used was still about “national crisis”, but most of us understood that viruses do not recognise borders, race, gender or age. Covid-19 is as global as it gets and so the solutions need to be global.

For this reason I am optimistic that the crisis will strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation. There is actually no other option if and when the aim is to save lives and get the economy back on track again. We need international agreements on how to react in similar situations in the future.

GLOBAL CRISES NEED GLOBAL SOLUTIONS
Insularity on the economy would be equally ludicrous. Yes, there will be an impact on value chains and production, but this does not mean that we should start setting up barriers to trade or the free movement of goods, services and people.

We at CMI are naturally most concerned with the impact of the pandemic in developing countries and areas plagued by conflict. That is why we have been working together with other conflict resolution organisations to make sure that existing crises do not escalate or that new ones emerge.

As an organisation, 2019 was a year of growth for us. Both our budget and staff grew. There was also an increase in requests for CMI to be involved in various stages of peace processes.

In the midst of CMI’s positive developments, we were hit with a great loss. Executive Director Tuija Talvitie passed away at the beginning of 2020. She was truly a great advocate of peace, a leader and a dear friend. I have never met a person with more “sisu” - courage and perseverance - than Tuija. She used to say that our job at CMI is to make the world a better place, everyday. And that is exactly what we intend to do this year, and for many more to come.

Increase the Peace,

**Alexander Stubb**
Chair of the Board
A WORD FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM:
OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME 2019

In 2019, CMI’s work was implemented in a changing global context where the international peacemaking system was severely challenged.

Hybrid warfare has widened the ‘grey’ area between peace and war, and impacted actors, their tools and their channels of influence. It is increasingly difficult to define conflict actors and their relative significance to conflict due to proxy dynamics involving regional and global powers. The economy, media, technology, and migration have increasingly been shaped, and even weaponized, to support the agendas of states and non-state actors involved in conflict.

Continued political pressure on multilateral organisations has stunted their ability to prevent, mitigate, or resolve armed conflict. This trend, coupled with the rise in increasingly overt transactional foreign politics, undercuts effective peace mediation processes. Furthermore, the label of ‘intra-state conflict’ no longer reflects the role of regional and global dynamics in internal developments within states in conflict, as illustrated in the cases of Libya and Yemen. Approaching these conflicts as ‘intra-state’ simply means that key parties crucial to ending the conflict are absent from the equation – and the peace table.

Today, looking at the world at the dawn of the new decade, the age-old notion of ‘the only constant in life is change’ rings true, perhaps more forcefully than ever. The speed and scope of the disruption caused by the pandemic has taken the world by surprise. The already troubled multilateral system struggles to drive a global response to the crisis. This is not the time for solo numbers but for joint efforts. For CMI, the principle of complementarity—understanding our niche and added value in support of a larger effort—is written in our DNA. While there is no quick fix available to the crisis, in the long term the only sustainable way forward is through the multilateral structures we have in place.

CMI seeks to fulfill its purpose by contributing to better peace processes, better peacemakers, and better peace practice. In 2019, CMI identified 24 such contributions to peace across our Global Programme, in contexts such as Myanmar, Yemen, Ukraine, Burundi and Libya. In all of these cases, CMI has been able to demonstrate how an independent organization can nudge official processes, actors, and practices forward through informal means, despite apparent deadlocks.

We have also played a role in advancing Finland’s development priorities through increased cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Here, joint activities conducted during Finland’s Presidency of the EU Council was a clear demonstration of trust and cooperation with mutual benefit. CMI provided targeted support to numerous fora in Brussels, including closed door briefings on subjects ranging from the Red Sea and Yemen to Ukraine.

CMI’s amplified partnerships with Nordic actors, specifically Sweden and Norway, demonstrate that we do not only operate as a part of the Finnish peace mediation ecosystem, but more broadly as a Nordic organization. Equally, and while CMI stresses the importance of our Finnish and Nordic identity, in 2019 we continued to demonstrate our added value within European frameworks for peace support. CMI works with EU support in the contexts of Palestine, Yemen, Ukraine and the South Caucasus. These efforts further enhance our ability to contribute to strong European cooperation and global multilateralism.

To mark our 20th anniversary in 2020, CMI’s legal structure will change from an association into a foundation. This transition will help define our role and build an enduring foundation for the conflict prevention and resolution in the times ahead. The anniversary year presents us with a perfect opportunity to celebrate our work and achievements together with our valued partners, supporters and friends – with whom we look forward to the next decades of building peace.
REGIONS AND PROJECTS 2019

Asia

Unlocking Peace Potential Through the Security Sector in Myanmar

Scoping for Peace-Making in East and South-East Asia

Eurasia

Advancing Dialogue In and Around Ukraine

Building Resilience to Conflict Through Dialogue in Ukraine

Supporting the Efficient Exercise of Gagauzia’s Autonomous Powers

Supporting the Peace Process in Georgia

European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK3)

Eurasia – Supporting Regional Mediation Skills

Middle East and North Africa

National Vision-Building and Conflict Mitigation in Libya

Supporting Palestinian Dialogue and Consensus

MENA: Fostering Regional Dialogue

Supporting National Reconciliation in Iraq

Supporting Inclusive Peacemaking Efforts and Political Transition in Yemen

Sub-Saharan Africa

Supporting Conflict Resolution in Africa

African Union Mediation Support Capacity

Advancing Constructive Dialogue in Burundi

Women in Peacemaking

Strengthening Women’s Political Influence in Conflict Resolution

Enhancing Inclusive and Gender Sensitive Mediation Capacities
UKRAINE: FOSTERING SOLUTIONS FOR THE PEACE PROCESS

In Ukraine, CMI supports a major nationally-led dialogue initiative that fosters solutions for the complex Donbas peace process and enables progress towards sustainable peace. Concretely, we do this by ensuring the ongoing functioning of the National Platform – Dialogue on Peace and Secure Reintegration, which provides a non-partisan, professional and inclusive space at all levels to discuss topics important to Ukrainian society.

In 2019, CMI provided support in establishing a comprehensive multi-track dialogue process via wide-ranging National Platform activities for bolstering societal and political participation in the development of policy proposals on conflict prevention and resolution. The inclusive multi-track mechanisms were successfully put into operation at local (Civil Marathons), regional (Regional Platforms) and national (National Platform) levels, where multiple issues related to conflict resolution, secure reintegration and national unity are being systematically addressed in an inclusive manner.

The results of numerous discussions are meant to be systematically included in concrete policy recommendations and reflected in the subsequent policy development documents. This creates opportunities for building a national consensus on the proposed solutions. CMI’s added value in this process is to bring international experience and best practices in conflict resolution to often heated internal discussions.

The National Platform also contributed to increasing public awareness on issues of conflict settlement, secure reintegration and national unity through strategic communication and media outreach. A significant audience was reached particularly for the National Platform activities through traditional and social media – about 9-million people in 2019, when we measure the total amount of generated media content. This unique public vehicle has successfully established itself as a safe, regular, politically neutral, constructive and professionally organised space promoting comprehensive conflict resolution at the policy level.

Our engagement in supporting the establishment of a comprehensive multi-track dialogue process in the country is built on previous dialogue work among Ukrainian opinion-makers. With the support of the European Union and CMI’s engagement, the National Platform will continue to deepen its strategic impact to enable the progress towards sustainable peace in a participatory and inclusive manner.

UKRAINE

Population: 43.9 million
Area: 603,628 km²
Largest cities: Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro
Human development index: 0.750 (ranked 88th in the world)

Our work: In Ukraine, CMI works to improve the robustness of the Donbas peace process by working both within Ukraine to promote dialogue and by building channels among stakeholders of the official peace process.
BURUNDI: SUPPORTING DOMESTIC EFFORTS TO NURTURE TRUST

CMI has been involved in supporting peace efforts in the Great Lakes region since 2014 by providing informal platforms for dialogue as well as supporting the formal East African Community (EAC)-led Inter-Burundi Dialogue.

In October 2018, the fifth and final round of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue took place under the leadership of the EAC. During the 20th Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State in February 2019, the EAC Facilitator, former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa presented his final report. Since then, the future of the regional dialogue process has remained open.

Informal exchanges between principal Burundian parties continued throughout 2019, thereby shifting the process from the regional to domestic level and from formal to informal talks. Building on the results of the EAC Facilitator’s extensive work, and the efforts led by Burundian national actors, CMI’s work has focused increasingly on supporting domestic efforts to nurture trust and spaces for internal dialogue in Burundi. CMI continues to accompany Burundian parties and actors in their work towards opening up the political space and preventing electoral violence.

BURUNDI

Population: 10.6 million
Area: 27,816 km²
Largest cities: Bujumbura, Gitega, Muyinga, Ngozi
Human development index: 0.423 (ranked 185th in the world)

Our work: CMI’s work focuses increasingly on supporting domestic efforts to nurture trust and spaces for internal dialogue in Burundi. CMI continues to accompany Burundian parties and actors in their work towards opening up the political space and preventing electoral violence.

Former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa visited CMI Founder, President Martti Ahtisaari at CMI’s office in September 2016. President Mkapa has facilitated the inter-Burundian dialogue. Photo: Riku Isohella
LIBYA: STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF MARGINALISED GROUPS

In 2019, CMI facilitated three informal dialogue platforms in Libya, with the aim of strengthening the voice of political parties, representatives from the Fezzan region, and Libyan women in the country’s transition process, and their role in local conflict resolution efforts.

Libyan political parties, previously outlawed, remain marginalised from the political process, which remains highly individualised and strongly contested. As Libyans struggle to overcome nearly a decade of conflict, parties can nonetheless assume a constructive role in advancing a stable political system. To this end, in early 2019 several Libyan political parties signed a Code of Conduct that they had developed with CMI’s facilitation over the past two years. Through the document, the parties reaffirm their commitment to advancing the transition to a pluralistic and democratic political system and denounce the use of violence for political ends. The process also reflects the potential of dialogue in fostering trust between parties from opposing sides of the political spectrum.

To advance women’s participation in Libya’s political processes, since 2016 CMI has fostered dialogue and cooperation among women leaders in civil society, politics and governance. These women across the country bring to the platform their networks, in-depth understanding of local dynamics and their shared commitment to advance stability and peace in Libya. In 2019, the Women’s Working Group supported local trust building efforts, developed recommendations for the political process, and began engaging women employed in the security sector, now and earlier, under the Gaddafi regime, with the aim of advancing reconciliation in a number of communities affected by the deep rifts since 2011. Aside from the Women’s Working Group, women’s inclusion is also a cross-cutting commitment in all of CMI’s work in Libya.

In the Fezzan, Libya’s marginalised South-Western region with long, porous borders, weak governance and communal rifts, CMI worked intensively in 2019 with a group of influential individuals from across the region to foster cooperation and inclusion of the region’s priorities in Libya’s transition process. The Fezzan Working Group brings together valuable local analysis of the region’s challenges and proposals for overcoming them. These proposals in the fields of security, reconciliation and development, have provided valuable input for Libyan decision-makers, the UN mission in Libya, as well as EU actors in Brussels. Moreover, with CMI’s support, the Fezzan Working Group has advanced local reconciliation through an inclusive process for a co-existence Charter in Sebha, the major city of the region.
THE UN HIGH-LEVEL SEMINARS PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY

Since 2013, altogether more than 200 leading mediation actors have attended the UN High-Level Seminars on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies, organised by UN DPPA, CMI, and PRIO with the support of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Norway.

CMI has a strong focus on gender equality and women’s participation in peace processes. Peace agreements are often only the beginning of peace processes, and inclusivity constitutes a key ingredient for building strong and resilient societies in the long term.

To offer practical tools and to promote gender-sensitive and inclusive mediation, the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, CMI, and the the Norwegian research institute PRIO, have been holding the UN High-Level Seminars on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies since 2013.

The 10th seminar was held in November 2019 in Helsinki, where it brought together 23 senior mediation actors from all over the world to discuss the role of gender in peacemaking policies and inclusive mediation practices.

The UN High-Level Seminars offer a rare platform for senior mediation practitioners to exchange concrete experiences, gain insights into how gender-sensitive and inclusive mediation is done in practice, and discuss the challenges faced in implementation. The seminar is also a showcase of Nordic cooperation, as it is funded by the Finnish and Norwegian Foreign Ministries.

2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), as well as the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Despite these commitments, the implementation of both the resolution and the declaration has been rather modest, and women continue to be marginalised in formal peace processes. For these reasons, platforms like the UN High-Level Seminar on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies are crucial for sharing experiences, promoting women’s participation, and offering practical “how-to” strategies for inclusive mediation.
BRINGING A GLIMMER OF HOPE FOR YEMENIS

The challenges facing Yemen are of such a scale that they require a multitrack approach to peacemaking. CMI’s work supports broader participation of key groups in the peace process.

After 5 years of devastating war, Yemenis are on the brink. Over 100 000 people have died. With 80 per cent of the population in need of aid, the situation in Yemen has become the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.

The peace process remains stalled. Peacemaking efforts have to deal with the intense complexity of the conflict and deep mistrust between conflict parties. Despite the extremely difficult situation, in 2019 CMI was able to bring a glimmer of hope to Yemenis by establishing channels of communication and making steps towards building trust among key conflict parties, and by helping them to identify options to the peace agreement and the ensuing transitional period. These proposals were channeled into the official UN-led peace process.

“I think our work had a clear added value. Still, Yemen is at the moment at a place where much more is needed to achieve peace,” explains CMI’s Yemen Project Manager Sylvia Thompson.

CMI’s work in Yemen aims to fill gaps in the official UN-led peace process. The UN-led process is a top-down endeavour that focuses on the main conflict parties and on completing the implementation of different agreements that are currently stalled.

However, it has become increasingly evident that the challenges facing Yemen are of such a scale that they cannot be addressed by a single process. The country is highly fragmented. The multiplicity of domestic and

The Kawkaban Fortress in the north-western part of Yemen is one of many UNESCO world heritage sites that have been entirely destroyed by the war. Photo: Sylvia Thompson / CMI
regional forces engaged and their complex allegiances requires a multi-track approach in peacemaking. Coordinated and parallel efforts are needed for reducing fighting and finding solutions through complementary ceasefires and peace agreements, operating in support of the official peace process.

CMI’s work supports the broader inclusion and participation of key groups in the peace process and the ensuing transitional period. One of CMI’s core principles, inclusion is meant to ensure the sustainability of the peace process, broad-based consideration of the various conflict drivers, and the discovery and development of potential solutions.

“The complexity in Yemen requires a much broader approach than the official peace process can offer. We have worked towards bringing together parties that are not represented in the official talks. As we move forward this year, we will emphasise the element of inclusion even more, by focusing specifically on women, tribal leaders and political parties, which are key groups that need to be included in the peace process,” says Thompson.

With CMI’s help, channels of communication between key stakeholders increased during 2019. Among these actors were the main conflict parties: the Houthis and the internationally recognised government (IRG), as well as tribal leaders, political parties, representatives of the Southern Movement, and women. The involved groups became less antagonistic towards each other both in behaviour and language.

For instance, the aforementioned groups came together to identify elements that have not been addressed in the peace process, and options for local security arrangements, reconciliation and governance. These meetings produced concrete inputs, related to the peace agreement and the ensuing transitional period, that were later fed into the official peace process.

“For instance, we focused on demystifying the concept of reconciliation. Yemenis in general tend to interpret reconciliation as accountability, but we discussed it more as a process and something that can be initiated at the local level. Small, local reconciliation efforts that can be later built on and feed into a larger national process,” describes Thompson.

Separately, CMI brought together influential Yemeni women to strengthen women’s role in peacemaking and in broader decision-making processes. The women provided substantive inputs to the peace process and transitional period.

Women in Yemen play important roles in bridging tribal, religious and political divides, given their particular social roles, shared status as women, and as key influencers of youth. Women are also better placed to build peace in Yemen, because they are not involved in the game of politics like men, explained Wahbia Ahmed Sabrah, Vice President at the Center for Yemeni Studies and Research.

“Women can inform politics and social affairs more than men, who are unable to do so due to interests that govern men and prevent them from being as honest as women. This is why working with women in Yemen is of paramount importance.”

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YEMEN

**Population:** 29.6 million  
**Area:** 455,000 km²  
**Largest cities:** Sanaa, Hodeida, Taiz, Aden  
**Human development index:** 0.463 (ranked 177th in the world)  

**Our work:** CMI supports the broader inclusion and participation of key groups (women, tribal leaders, political parties and movements) in the peace process and the ensuing transitional period.
CMI has a long history of working in Asia, but it was only in 2019 that the organisation established its first regional team for Asia. CMI’s key engagement in the region is currently Myanmar, where the organisation supports the development of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

In 2019, CMI established a regional team for Asia to continue the historical engagement of President Ahtisaari in the broader region. CMI’s key engagement in Asia is Myanmar, where the organisation has been invited to help develop ceasefire monitoring in partnership with the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC). Effective monitoring of the nationwide ceasefire agreement is crucial for advancing Myanmar’s stalled peace process involving the central government and ethnic armed opposition groups.

“We had a clear entry based on local request and could see that our organisation’s expertise would be able to match the current situation”, says Oskari Eronen, Head of Asia team.

President Martti Ahtisaari’s and CMI’s most renowned work in Asia is the peace process in Indonesia’s Aceh province, which brought a decade-long conflict to an end in 2005. In addition to the work done in Indonesia, CMI has been following the situation in Myanmar for over a decade. Over the years, CMI has received requests to be involved in Myanmar, and in 2019 the organisation concluded that it would have enough additional value to engage with the situation.

“The time was ripe for this kind of cooperation”, says CMI’s Senior Advisor General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen, who joined CMI in January 2019.
Historically, Myanmar was a British colony, and since gaining independence in 1948 the country has had an ongoing internal armed conflict. The conflict is one of the world’s longest running civil wars, lasting over 70 years. Myanmar is a country with a very diverse population, having well over a hundred spoken languages and ethnic groups. The ongoing conflict involves the Myanmar government and its armed forces, and some 20 different armed ethnic minorities in Myanmar.

In 2015, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed by the government and some of the ethnic groups, setting in motion the national peace process, which generated high hopes of delivering agreements on sustainable political reform. Unfortunately, the process has progressed slowly and trust has eroded, which has resulted in a stalemate.

Myanmar’s peace process is completely nationally owned. CMI has partnered with the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC), a national entity supporting the implementation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. CMI has been well-received and cooperation with the local partner has been productive.

"CMI has had a different approach on the development of the ceasefire monitoring compared to other actors and previous attempts in the region. Dialogue and honest discussions have been the key in this partnership," says General Wilhelmsen.

"CMI places a strong emphasis on inclusiveness and local ownership in its work. It is important to include all the different local actors in the process."

"Dialogue and honest discussions have been the key in this partnership"

A team of CMI experts provides advisory support to the development of the ceasefire monitoring process. CMI experts visit the country on a regularly basis to meet with committee members and in particular to work with its Technical Secretariat Centre (TSC).

"Well-functioning ceasefire monitoring mechanism would be an important foundation for Myanmar’s peace process, and serve to prevent further suffering of the population too", explains Eronen.

MYANMAR

Population: 56.6 million
Area: 676,578 km²
Largest cities: Yangon, Mandalay, Naypyidaw
Human development index: 0.58 (ranked 145th in the world)
Our work: CMI provides advisory support to the development of the ceasefire monitoring capacities of the nationally owned peace process in Myanmar.
Cooperation with independent organisations like CMI has become a key element of the UN’s peace mediation work. “It’s a good symbiosis,” says Kai Sauer, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and CMI board member.

The United Nations will reach the venerable age of 75 this year. The organisation was established on 24 October 1945 amidst the devastation of the Second World War. The UN’s task was above all to ensure that future generations would never have to suffer the horrors of war.

But in this anniversary year the UN hardly deserves a very complimentary rating for task performance. The world is a more troubled place than it has been for a long time, with several intractable wars raging, from Syria to Yemen. Rising antagonism between the major powers has incapacitated the UN Security Council, the key task of which is to safeguard world peace.

“This highlights the ineffectiveness of the UN. The organisation has been marginalised from quite a number of peace promoting processes. One example is Syria,” says Mr. Kai Sauer, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Sauer is a long-standing diplomat who served as Finland’s Permanent Representative to the UN from 2014 to 2019. He started as CMI’s board member last December.

He points out that the challenges posed by relations among the major powers are integral to the activity of the Security Council. When the world body was set up, the five permanent members of the Security Council were granted the right of veto on its decisions.

“This was the price that had to be paid to get the major powers on board. Then the role of the UN Secretary-General is another issue. Some secretary-generals challenge the major powers to act, others don’t. Certainly, the current Secretary-General is pretty cautious,” Sauer says of António Guterres.

But Sauer points out that despite the difficulties incurred by major power relations, the UN has made advances in the field of peace mediation this millennium. Finland has played an active role in this, in particular when the normative basis for peace mediation was created at the UN. Also, Finland has promoted the strengthening of the role of women and young people in peace processes.

Support of independent actors such as CMI has become increasingly important for peace mediation activities of the UN to succeed. The informal nature of the work of organisations provides opportunities and freedoms. Unlike the UN, non-governmental actors are able to build trust between the parties to a conflict without the weight of politics, and out of the glare of publicity. At best, this work supports an official peace process being led by the UN.

“Through independent organisations, the UN is capable of doing things that it cannot manage on its own.”

“Through independent organisations, the UN is capable of doing things that it cannot manage on its own. It’s a good symbiosis. CMI is one of the leading organisations in this cooperation model,” Sauer notes.

He says that in places such as Syria and Yemen the informal diplomacy of independent operators has been beneficial.

“There haven’t been any breakthroughs here. But there are several tracks that will hopefully at some point yield a result. There is much scope in these conflicts for this sort of quiet diplomacy.”
The UN’s achievements in the area of peace have remained modest in recent years, but there have been successes in other fields. Humanitarian aid saves lives and alleviates human suffering. Sauer highlights the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda, as the greatest success during his time as ambassador.

"Of course the UN is essential when you look at the 75-year-old organisation as a whole."

The primary role of the UN, he says, is to provide a platform for equal dialogue between the governments of different countries.

"There’s no such global forum anywhere else."

Secretary-General Guterres has launched a comprehensive reform programme to improve the effectiveness of the UN. Sauer says that many of the problems are inherent, resulting from a “management by committee” style. And he would restore the political idealism that led to the UN.

"Hopefully, the UN will continue for the next 75 years. As to whether there will be enough results in terms of its efficiency, I’m not sure."

The UN came into being in 1945 with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility for this task. All Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.

Council can take action to solve a situation that threatens peace. Council’s five permanent members wield veto power over its actions.

In addition to maintaining peace and security, the UN protects human rights, delivers humanitarian aid, promotes sustainable development and upholds international law.

The UN also offers its Member States a forum for debate and joint problem solving.
SUPPORTING EUROPEAN RESPONSES FOR GLOBAL CRISSES

The EU’s ambition of playing a role in the peaceful resolution of conflicts remains a priority. CMI continues to support European preparedness and response for the global crises of today and tomorrow, writes CMI’s Roxana Cristescu, Director for European Affairs.

2019 was a year of transition for the European Union, with parliamentary elections and high-level appointments – a lengthy undertaking stretched over months, stretching the patience of European Union citizens, Eurocrats in Brussels, and the EU’s international partners alike. While no major international crisis disrupted last year’s change of leadership, internal fault lines widened, involving rule of law problems across Central and Eastern Europe, Brexit, and negotiations on asylum management and refugee burden-sharing.

Come 2020, with the COVID-19 storm yet to strike, the hot topic in European affairs’ circles was not only how the division of labour between the new leading trio (the President of the Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and President of the EU Council) would drive an EU foreign policy already widely perceived as “herbivorous and uncoordinated”, but also what the newly announced “geopolitical ambitions of the Commission” really entailed. What became clear at the start is the strong focus on Africa as a strategic partner: One of the first travels of the EU Commission’s President, Ursula von der Leyen, was to Addis Ababa and the African Union Headquarters. The Commission also unveiled new key priorities for EU-Africa relations, including deepening partnerships for peace, security and governance.

The first weeks of 2020 put the EU’s aspirations to be a global actor to an immediate test. It was difficult to envisage how bringing Europe back into the era of geopolitics would be possible given the rapid and profound changes in the contexts such as of Iran, Libya, Yemen that took place at the expense of EU member states and EU institutions. How would these renewed challenges not further exacerbate internal divisions and expose EU foreign policy strategic shortcomings?

And yet, at its origins, the EU is a peacemaking project. Despite the cynicism and criticism of its “toothless” approaches and slow-paced external action, the European players have not achieved success in one day. As the Finnish saying goes “hiljaa hyvä tulee” (good things come slowly). The EU’s long-term game, its reputation for slow yet dependable policymaking, its insistence on values, rule of law, and safeguarding of multilateralism may yet bring value in an international setting where volatility and tit-for-tat competition have become the norm.

The EU’s ambition of playing a role in supporting the peaceful resolution of conflicts globally remains a priority – if only to (re)establish external credibility, and to anticipate the next crises that will existentially affect Europe. CMI has worked closely with EU institutions and European actors for over a decade - focusing on EU’s external role in promoting peace and stability, in particular through its involvement in mediation in Brussels, European capitals and in the field – Ukraine, Yemen, South Caucasus, Palestine.

At its origins, the EU is a peacemaking project.

Beyond discussions on possible geopolitical scenarios and challenges posed by pandemics or internal games of interest, a fundamental question remains: How can Europe prepare for such crises? With long-term engagement at the core of CMI’s raison d’être - we will continue to work on supporting European preparedness and response for the global crises of today and tomorrow.
PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING

PARTNERSHIPS

Our partnerships strategy builds on the notion of peacemaking being essentially a shared endeavour. CMI is grateful to its institutional partners for their continued political and financial support without which our work in conflict prevention and resolution would not be possible.

To ensure our independence and the sustainability of our operations, we continue to develop a complementary and diverse funding base. The commitment of our programmatic partners – Finland, Sweden and Ireland – enables both long-term engagement and flexibility to explore emerging opportunities. We are equally thankful to other governmental and institutional donors for their support through targeted project funding.

PRIVATE FUNDRAISING

CMI wishes to thank all our private donors, individuals and foundations, as well as our corporate partners. It is only with your support CMI is able to continue and further develop its work. Private funds are a necessity to us as we react to emerging or suddenly escalating conflicts, or put our efforts in creating new, innovative ways to advance the science and art of peace mediation in today’s challenging circumstances.

All conflicts can be resolved – with your support.

THANK YOU

PARTNERS AND DONORS

European Commission
Government of Belgium
Government of Ireland
Government of the Netherlands
Government of Norway
Government of Sweden
Government of Switzerland
UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

Other supporters and partners in-kind
Algol, B2B Solutions, City of Jyväskylä, Esmes, Iittala Group, Kone, Kusinkapital, Studio Kaarre, Tekir, Welldone L.R.

Foundations and Other Donors
American Friends of CMI (AFCMI), Alfred Kordelin Foundation, Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation, Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Stiftelsen Tre Smeder, Svenska Kulturfonden, Valkeakoski-Tohka rotaryklubi ry
CMI continued to grow in 2019 achieving its history’s highest annual income. CMI has successfully strengthened its cooperation with funders and broadened its funding base especially with the EU. Continued growth entails further modernizing of administrative and financial processes as well as applying new tools and working methods in support of CMI’s core work.

Finance overview

CMI’s total income in 2019 was 9.3M€, which is 17 percent higher than in the previous year (7.9M€). The net result amounted to 84T€ which is an increase from the previous year’s 27T€. The higher net result is due to CMI’s higher overall activity volume while the administrative expenses materialized slightly below the budgeted level. The cashflow and liquidity of CMI remains at a good level.

The governmental funding base grew to 8.2M€ which is a 37% increase from 2018 (6.1M€). Private unearmarked fundraising amounted to 520T€ reflecting a decrease of 36% from 2018 (817T€). Other non-governmental funding totalled 539T€. CMI’s largest single funder continued to be the Government of Finland with 4.4M€ of funding representing 47% of total CMI funding. Other key funders include the European Union with 1.6M€ funding (17% of total) reflecting a 63% increase from 597T€ in 2018 and Sweden with 1.3M€ of funding (14% of total). Other government funding totalled 850T€. CMI has been successful in broadening and deepening its funding base in the past years.

The partnership with Finnish MFA remains important and the new Finnish MFA Development Cooperation Programme funding cycle started in 2018 and will continue until 2021. Partnerships with EU and Sweden are expanding in line with CMI’s increased total volumes.
CMI’s private fundraising continues to be key in providing flexibility in actualizing program activities.

CMI was expecting growth to continue at a steady pace for 2020. However, the COVID-19 outbreak in the beginning of 2020 will have a negative impact on CMI’s activity levels and overall volumes – the level of which remains to be seen.

**Financial monitoring**

The finance team continues to produce timely information for CMI regional teams and management in order to enable well-informed decision-making at all levels of the organization. Reports, budgets, forecasts and actual expenditure are produced and compiled on a monthly as well as tertile basis. A key principle for the finance and administration team is to better serve the organization and enable the success of CMI’s teams in reaching their goals. New initiatives include a standardized financial dashboard with financial KPIs as well as monthly HR well-being barometer results and key employee figures. In addition, forecasting and reporting processes as well as collaboration & management tools are being reviewed with the goal of streamlining, modernizing and providing better value-added information flow within CMI.

Best practice corporate governance and financial monitoring of CMI’s activities are key to appropriately and transparently adhering to regulations and fulfilling our funder requirements. CMI follows a set principle of internal policies and carries our regular monitoring to ensure adherence to agreed internal rules, policies and processes. Regular financial monitoring allows CMI to respond swiftly to emerging challenges and mitigate risks beforehand. CMI’s projects are regularly audited according to various donor requirements. The finance team also carries out regular monitoring visits to the field to ensure processes and activities are being conducted according to set principles.
Organisational and Human Resources

At the end of 2019 CMI had 65 employees – 62 employees in Helsinki and 3 in Brussels. In addition, CMI has a variable number of staff consultants depending on project needs. These staff consultants equaled 24 at the end of 2019. Compared to the previous year the total number of staff has increased from 71 to 89.

2019 saw an increase in recruitments due to new project funding and longer leaves of permanent staff. There were 14 staff on leave at the end of 2019. Continuing the practice of secondments between CMI and the Finnish MFA, CMI seconded an employee to the MFA for 2019. The exchange further enhanced the close and established cooperation with the Finnish MFA. In 2020 the number of personnel is expected to again increase slightly. Internal transition between positions has been high in recent years thus creating a need for more external recruitments.

Decision-making

CMI’s highest decision-making organ, the General Meeting, convened two times in 2019. CMI has 108 members.

The Board consists of the Chair Alexander Stubb and seven other board members, selected for a two-year period. CMI’s Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for CMI’s long-term strategy, significant financial decisions, the approval of new members and the appointment of the Executive Director. President Martti Ahtisaari continues as Senior Advisor to CMI.

CMI’s Executive Director leads CMI’s operational work and the implementation of CMI’s strategy. The Leadership Team supports the Executive Director in planning and decision-making. Members of the Leadership Team are (as of 2020) the (acting) Executive Director, Programme Director, Director for Global Strategy, Director for European Affairs & Head, Eurasia, Director of Communications and Fundraising, and Director of Finance and Administration.

Security

There were no security incidents during 2019. CMI continues to operate amid the most complex conflicts in the world. Our work takes place in contexts of high vulnerability and uncertainty. CMI’s dedication to the safety and security of its staff and organization continues to be a priority in all our project and programme implementation. Physical security and safety demands overlap with the requirements of working discreetly and confidentially. To reinforce operational reliability, CMI has continued to develop its practices managing both physical and information security risk.

Information Security management has improved in 2019 with deeper integration of security controls and operational implementation requirements. Technical solutions have been modernized substantially, while providing staff members and project teams with the necessary training for information security related decision-making.
Staff training remains a key cornerstone of CMI’s security management programme. CMI has continued to invest in Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) for all staff members with frequent travel. Outsourced HEAT training complements the already existing and strong tradition of mandatory and optional security training provided at CMI. In 2019, the mandatory security training curriculum for all new staff members was expanded and re-written to reflect the changes in the contemporary security environment.

CMI continues to utilize world-class partners in providing security for its staff members. International SOS (ISOS) remains a key partner for providing CMI’s staff with global security, safety and emergency support. In addition, CMI remains a member of the European Inter-Agency Security Forum (EISF) with strong ties to industry peers.

Wellbeing

In 2019, CMI took several steps to enhance the wellbeing of employees. These included continuing the staff wellbeing program with Hintsa Performance, launching a monthly employee satisfaction survey to ensure quick feedback to the Leadership on staff wellbeing, a mentoring programme for the Leadership team and several policy and process related updates. In 2020 CMI will continue to focus on these development areas by continuing the Hintsa wellbeing programme, supervisor training and furthering the development of processes and ways of working that support employee wellbeing.
One big goal for 2019 was to strengthen our staff’s own communication capacity using training courses. These courses were given by our pro bono partner Miltton, a Finnish communications agency. Training focused on giving presentations, interviews and the use of social media. The courses were successful and helped our staff to understand the changing media scenery and increase their own communications skills. Our experts appeared in the mass media and took part in various events both in Finland and abroad.

Does climate change cause conflicts?

Climate change may pose a major challenge to peace in the coming years. That being said, climate change doesn’t directly cause conflicts, but it can aggravate existing tensions. We conducted a social media campaign focused on Peace Day, in September, to discuss the nexus between climate change and conflicts. The campaign raised three important points: 1) climate change is a threat multiplier, 2) societies need stability to adapt to climate change, and 3) climate change can create shared interests for conflict parties. We made videos to highlight the key points and shared them on social media.

Climate change was also one of the themes discussed at our annual fundraising dinner Jyrki Katainen, European Commissioner at the time, gave the evening’s keynote speech and highlighted the importance to Europe’s future of the circular economy, AI, security, and Africa. Our expert panel discussed climate change and examined the different challenges Europe faces.

In terms of social media, CMI’s online presence continued to grow steadily in 2019 (with increases in followers on Facebook 8%, Twitter 18%, Instagram 25%). We succeeded in producing stimulating content for our website too, and saw an increase in traffic to the website, with page views increasing by 42% and the number of visitors by 27%.
Ahtisaari Days took the message of conflict resolution abroad.

2019 was a busy year for Ahtisaari Days. The Ahtisaari Days were organised first in Jyväskylä, Finland, where around 500 students and teachers in the greater Jyväskylä region learned about CMI’s work. CMI staff and the Lennons visited 11 schools and held lessons about conflict resolution and peace mediation.

In addition to the annual event in Finland, the Ahtisaari Days were held outside the country. After the successful Jyväskylä event, the Ahtisaari Days travelled to the heart of Europe, Brussels. CMI staff visited two international schools and the Finnish Embassy hosted a lunch event discussing the future of schools.

What lies behind the success of the Finnish education and school system, and how can its high level be preserved in the future? Panelists discussed the future of education and emphasised that an equal and inclusive school system is definitely Finland’s strength. Inclusiveness is an important guiding value for peace mediation too. CMI’s Riikka Marjamäki pointed out that the competence of both the peace mediator and the teacher require the same skills: an ability to listen to one another and treat everyone equally.

Toward the future of school

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has long been a partner of CMI and the Ahtisaari Days. Together with the ministry, CMI held an Ahtisaari Days panel discussion moderated by Finnish journalist Arto Nyberg at the Finnish Embassy in Brussels.

Find out more: www.ahtisaaripaiva.fi

The Ahtisaari Days have taken place since 2011 and in 2019 was the first time they were held abroad. Brussels and the Finnish EU Presidency provided a great setting for the first international Ahtisaari Days. Clearly, Ahtisaari Days’ themes of reconciliation and the importance of dialogue skills are of interest to schools outside Finland as well.

While in Brussels CMI staff visited pupils from the Nordic countries attending the European School and the Scandinavian School of Brussels. There, our experts got to see the everyday life of these international schools and to engage with local teachers and students. The message of the Ahtisaari Days resonated in the Brussels schools. Many students became enthusiastic about peace mediation and the classes prompted a stimulating discussion on the themes of the Ahtisaari Days.
TUIJA TALVITIE IN MEMORIAM

The Executive Director of the Crisis Management Initiative, Tuija Talvitie, passed away at her home in Espoo on 2 January 2020, following a long illness. She was born in Lapua, Ostrobothnia on 29 August 1959.

In autumn 2009, Tuija Talvitie was appointed as CMI’s Executive Director. Prior to that she was a member of the CMI board for four years. When she joined the management of CMI, the organisation was small on an international scale and struggling with the financial challenges this posed. Over the next 10 years, CMI evolved into one of the most respected conflict resolution organisations internationally, operating globally with almost 100 experts.

The mainstays of Talvitie’s entire career were learning, cooperation, and curiosity. It was based on these principles that she, together with the entire CMI team, built an internationally respected and successful organisation. She was renowned as a strong advocate of genuine cooperation and interaction, and was highly respected by parties to conflicts, international partners, and CMI colleagues.

Talvitie had an extensive interest in the different phenomena of the world and society. Among the things close to her heart were equality issues, interdisciplinary collaboration and the innovations generated by them. She fostered an environment that encouraged employees to think about and try something new. It was thanks to Talvitie that CMI has grown as an acclaimed expert and advocate of the theme of women in peacemaking. The use of new technologies and neurosciences in peace mediation are other examples of such open-mindedness.

As a manager and individual, Talvitie was approachable and always had time for others. Her strong confidence in colleagues and partners made for easy cooperation. Talvitie said: “When good people act, good things happen.” She had the ability to get people to have confidence in themselves, and often Talvitie was caught up in the enthusiasm. Though the substance of the work concerned global problems and human suffering, Talvitie would often try to approach challenges by finding a positive angle. She had a firm vision that the world could be changed for the better, and her desire to change things served as a role model and support for others.
ALL CONFLICTS CAN BE RESOLVED

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