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# CMI NEWS



Women voice their views about the peace process

Text: Seme Nelson / Johanna Poutanen Photos: Johanna Poutanen

## **Women parliamentarians engage citizens in the South Sudan peace process**

**“The formal peace process has not paid sufficient attention to the voices of ordinary citizens,” women from across three states in South Sudan agree. The country is seeking to move out of a recent violent crisis and continue building a joint future. For sustainable peace to take root, citizens need to take an active role and feel a true ownership of the peace talks. CMI is supporting women parliamentarians to engage more women citizens in the process.**

South Sudan, the world’s youngest country, has been in the process of building a new nation since its independence in 2011. Despite positive progress over the years, politically motivated violence broke out in late 2013, which has led to thousands of victims and a famine that is threatening millions. As the country seeks to tackle the current crisis, a key priority should be to ensure that the underlying causes of instability are tackled in genuine dialogue with the citizens.



The consultations were warmly welcomed by the communities in the three piloted states

CMI has been working in South Sudan since the country's independence. One of our focuses is supporting women parliamentarians in their efforts to improve women's meaningful engagement in the on-going peace process.

### Local consultations to hear women's views

To allow women to have a say in the process, CMI supported the Women Parliamentarians' Caucus at the National Legislature to design and carry out a pilot consultation process among citizens. The aim was to collect women's views on the planned transitional government, the inclusivity of the ongoing peace talks and the proposed process for a national dialogue. The consultations were conducted in close collaboration with a national civil society organisation; the South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme.

The consultations were warmly welcomed by the local communities in the three piloted states: Eastern Equatoria, Central Equatoria and Warrap. They brought together women leaders from all state counties, women representing internally displaced people and state-level women parliamentarians. For many it was the first time to be engaged and heard in such discussions. Mrs **Kiden** from Central Equatoria aptly summarised the importance of being heard: "once you are part of the process, you will own the outcome and take responsibility for how those outcomes will be sustained."

### Low awareness of the peace process hinders participation

Across all three states, the consulted women expressed that the formal peace process has not sufficiently listened to and reflected the voices of ordinary citizens, particularly those most marginalised. The consultations further revealed a strikingly low awareness about the formal peace talks. Without sufficient information and awareness, it is virtually impossible to expect a meaningful participation by citizens.

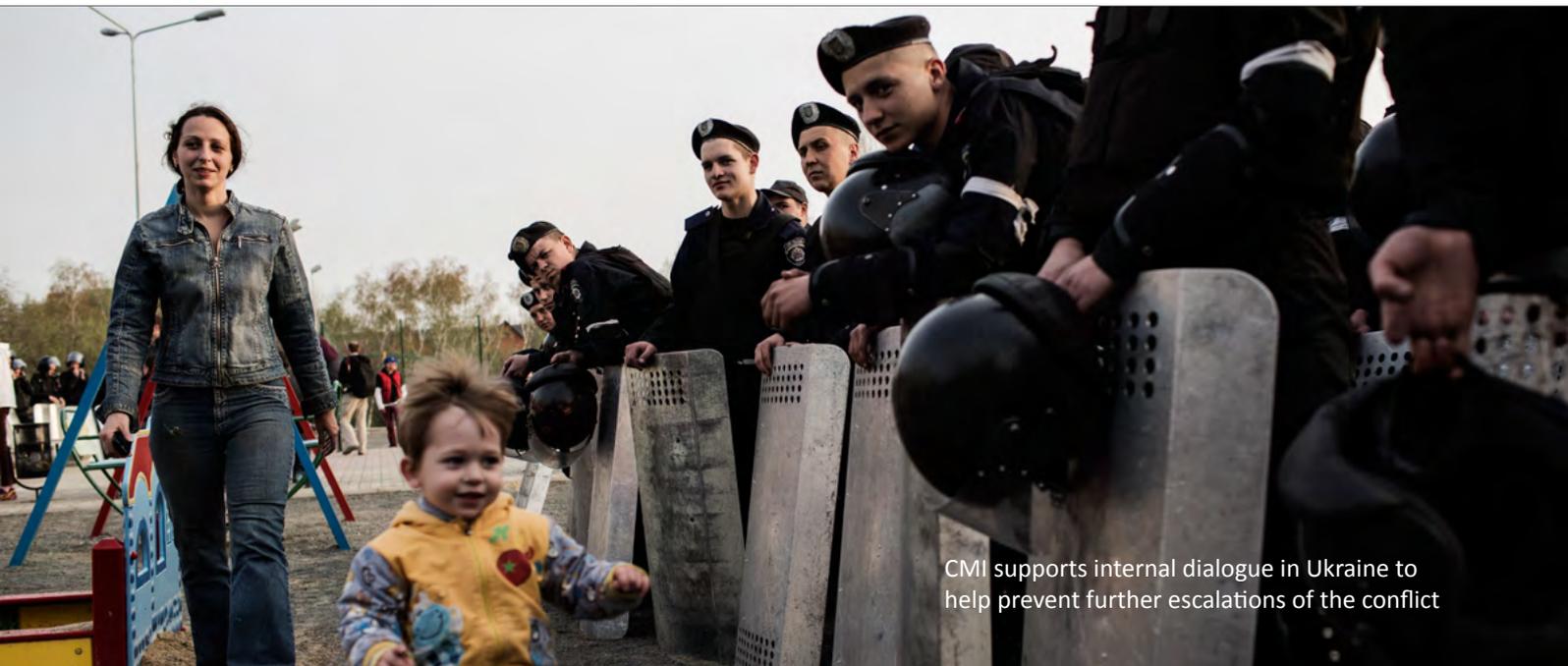
The initiative by the women parliamentarians can be seen as a milestone in involving ordinary South Sudanese into the peace process. Hon. **Suzan Wasuk**, the Chairperson of Women Parliamentary Caucus, summarised the findings: "These views call upon members of the Caucus to facilitate engagements that take the peace process to the people, rather than taking the people to the peace process."

To improve overall awareness among citizens, one of the subsequent recommendations by the women parliamentarians is that peace talk parties ensure sufficient information-sharing about the process and its results through networks such as churches, media and the civil society. This and other key policy recommendations drawn from the consultations have been shared with relevant stakeholders, including all negotiating teams, the national leadership and the mediators.

This unique initiative and the recommendations have overall been well-received. “The outcomes of these pilot consultations provide a stronger foundation for the negotiations, because only by listening to the voices of the ordinary citizens can we achieve sustainable peace,” Hon. **Beatrice Aber**, a member of the government negotiation team, concluded.

## **Current crisis in South Sudan**

- On 15 December 2013 South Sudan descended into civil war. The violence began in Juba when forces loyal to President Salva Kiir clashed with those supporting former Vice President Riek Machar. The conflict has been seen to originate in a power struggle over the leadership of ruling party, SPLM.
- The violence has claimed thousands of lives and displaced some 1.7 million people from their homes. Over three million people are considered to be at risk of famine.
- Peace talks between delegations representing the President and the opposition forces began on 5 January under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).
- A cessation of hostilities agreement was signed on 23 January, and reaffirmed on 9 May, but have not put a stop to the fighting. Both the EU and US have issued sanctions, but these have had little impact.
- The formal peace talks now focus on producing a permanent cease-fire agreement and outlining a political settlement through a transitional government, but progress has been limited.



CMI supports internal dialogue in Ukraine to help prevent further escalations of the conflict

Text: Caroline Haga Photos: Niklas Meltio

## Seeking solutions to the conflict in Ukraine through dialogue

Hardly anyone in Europe can have avoided hearing about the current situation in Ukraine and its international implications during the past months. However, little attention has been paid to the underlying tensions within the country and the necessity to build a shared vision of its future. CMI works with key groups in Ukraine to help prevent future escalations of the conflict, address critical issues and look for joint solutions to the crisis.

“We are working with people who believe that the conflict in Ukraine cannot be resolved without internal cooperation,” says CMI’s Programme Director **Ville Brummer**. “As an impartial actor, we support dialogue among key socio-political actors so that they can jointly discuss the country’s current situation, constructively address conflict issues and together search for ways out of the crisis.”

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has remained in transition from its post-Soviet past. Little attention has thus far been paid to encouraging internal dialogue on issues related to building a shared vision of how Ukraine should develop as a state and a nation.

Only the violent conclusion to the Euromaidan protest movement against President Yanukovich, the crises in the Crimean peninsula and subsequently in the east of Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk regions), and the regional instability that followed have drawn broader attention to the numerous conflict-prone fault lines within the country.

### Dialogue group looking for joint solutions

CMI has supported Ukraine’s peaceful development since 2010. To support the resolution of the current crisis, we facilitate an impartial dialogue among Ukraine’s key political and intellectual actors on critical dividing issues within the country and its long-term development prospects.

The group includes members of the Verkhovna Rada (the Ukrainian Parliament), all key political groupings, as well as independent intellectual and civil society leaders. They are drawn from different parts of the country, including the Donetsk and Lugansk regions. Together they represent a broad range of political views about the situation in the country.

The group met for their first discussions on 19-20 July, only a couple of days after the Malesian Airways plane crashed in Ukraine. Convening in Vienna, they discussed, among others, the experiences from peace and nation-building processes in Northern Ireland and Finland.

The group has continued their work ever since. “At their first meeting, they agreed to continue the dialogue regularly to search for ways to stabilise the situation in the country,” Ville Brummer explains. A series of meetings are planned for the next months in Kyiv, and different European capitals. “In the near future, CMI will also support the group in sharing the results of their work with key international actors,” he concludes.



## Project news

### Sharing learnings and ideas for responding to African crises



Solving the complex conflicts in Africa require a comprehensive approach, CMI's expert panelists agreed at a seminar convened in Finland to discuss the status of peacemaking in African diplomacy. Sharing their experiences and practical examples of responding to various crises, experts emphasised the importance of knowledge-sharing, regional and historical understanding and close cooperation among various actors. The esteemed panel on 1 September included Ambassador **Nicolas Bwakira**, Ambassador **Nureldin Satti**, Ambassador **David Kapya**, Mr **Georg Charpentier**, and Colonel **Mbaye Faye**.

» [Read more](#)

### Training in Senegal enriches capacities of African experts

Peace and conflict resolution experts from West Africa and beyond gathered at the end of June in Saly, Senegal to deepen their knowledge of conflict analysis and mediation strategy design. The mostly scenario-based training combined theoretical and practical exercises to further develop the concrete mediation skills of the 22 participants from 11 countries. Particular focus was paid to gender inclusivity and a case study on Guinea Bissau. The one-week training was organised by CMI and the United Nations Office for West Africa.



» [Read more](#)

» [UNOWA press release 27 June: African peace and security actors gathered to follow CMI - UNOWA training](#)

## High-level expert dialogue on the Transdniestrian settlement process in Austria



CMI continues to support the Transdniestrian settlement process by bringing together senior official and independent experts from the two sides of the conflict divide and from key international capitals. On 14-17 June, CMI's standing high-level dialogue group convened in Austria for an intensive expert dialogue to elaborate a retrospective analysis of the Transdniestrian settlement process, and to analyse trends which may impact the process in the near future. The two-day dialogue held in the Vienna Woods

was followed by discussions in Vienna with Permanent Representations to the OSCE, OSCE Secretariat representatives and the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

» [Read more](#)

## Organisational news

### Remembering veteran UN mediator Margaret Vogt



Everyone at CMI were very sorry to hear about the passing of Madame **Margaret Vogt**, UN Mediator-in-Residence. Mme Vogt was a remarkable and inspirational woman peacebuilder. During a UN career spanning more than three decades, she was a vocal proponent for women's increased participation in peace processes and actively worked to further this cause. We were grateful to have the opportunity in May 2014 to interview her about her views on women's role in peace processes and the severe crisis in the Central African Republic.

» [Read the full interview](#)

### CMI campaigns for Peace Day in Finland



The International Day of Peace is celebrated each year on 21 September. Along with peacebuilders across the world, CMI naturally participates in sharing the message during the day. This year, we aimed to fill social media and other news channels in Finland with peace messages instead of the much too common images of war. A moving video demonstrated how different our everyday life would be if we lived in a conflict country such

as millions do at this very moment. With the support of prominent Finnish journalists, our nation-wide campaign got Finns to become peace correspondents and share their own messages. We warmly thank all the supporters that made our campaign possible!

- » [Take a look at the video](#)
- » [Campaign website \(in Finnish\)](#)

## CMI attends 69th UN General Assembly

With the world buffeted by multiple international crises, CMI Executive Director **Tuija Talvitie**, Programme Director **Ville Brummer**, and US Representative **Payton Knopf** attended the opening week of the 69th UN General Assembly in New York on 22-26 September. “This week was a critical opportunity to deepen CMI’s connections with the global policy community and to build awareness of the unique role that private diplomacy organisations can play in addressing the numerous challenges to international peace and security unfolding around the world,” said Ms Talvitie.

» [Read more](#)

## President Ahtisaari appointed to UN advisory role

President **Martti Ahtisaari** has agreed to act in an advisory role to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Investigation Team that will be investigating alleged human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

» [More information](#)

## The Ahtisaari Days to be held in Finland again in November

In 2014, the Ahtisaari Days for mediation and reconciliation are celebrated on Tuesday 11 and Thursday 13 November. On Tuesday, CMI and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra organise an international seminar in Helsinki titled *New Dynamics in Politics and Business: How to understand motives and implications?* On Thursday, a public event with President **Ahtisaari** is held at the University of Turku, and he and CMI staff visit schools to highlight the importance of reconciliation.

» [Information about the Ahtisaari Days](#)

## New appointments

Mr **Payton Knopf** has been appointed as CMI’s representative in the United States, based in Washington DC and New York. Mr Knopf is a former U.S. diplomat with expertise in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. [Read more](#)

Ambassadors **Nureldin Satti**, **Nicolas Bwakira**, **David Kapya** and **Corentin Ki-Doulaye** have as Senior Advisers provided valuable support to CMI’s Sub-Saharan Africa team since June 2014.

Dr **Ali Zobi** has been appointed as an Adviser working for CMI’s project in Libya.

## Vacancies

- » CMI is seeking a Head for the Middle East programme (deadline 12 October)
- » CMI is looking for a Project Assistant for the Palestine team (deadline 9 October)

# WE BELIEVE IN A CONFLICT-FREE WORLD

We believe that all violent conflicts can be resolved if there's sufficient political will and skill. Achieving lasting peace requires long-term commitment, local ownership, creative solutions and broad involvement by everyone, including women and youth.

In today's world, we are all interconnected. The development and welfare of other nations, no matter how far away, has an effect on all our lives.

**Help us make a difference and bring more peace to the world!**

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