



The Global Coalition for
Conflict Transformation

Bi-monthly GCCT Newsletter - April 2014

Introduction

TransConflict (www.transconflict.com) is pleased to present the seventh bi-monthly Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation (GCCT) newsletter, which provides a host of insights into the work of the GCCT and its members. The main purpose of this newsletter is to a) share information about the work of the GCCT and its members to a wider audience, and b) to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between GCCT members themselves and with other interested parties.

- [Click here to learn more about the GCCT](#)
- [Click here for a complete list of GCCT members](#)

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**To contribute to the next edition of the GCCT newsletter –
which will be published in mid-June – please contact
TransConflict at - gcct@transconflict.com.**

1) New members of the GCCT

The GCCT was pleased to welcome a host of new members in the past several months, including (click on the links below for further information):

1. [Africa Peace Forum](#) - [Kenya](#) ([Eastern Africa](#)) - APFO was established in 1994 to contribute to the effective management of conflicts and the promotion of peace and security in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region (this included Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo). It facilitates research and advocacy on areas of peace and security at national, regional and international level, and has six main programme areas - a) Conflict Early Warning and Early Response; b) Small Arms and Light Weapons; c) Peacebuilding; d) Governance; e) Advocacy and Consultancy and f) Research. Its Mission is "to contribute towards the prevention, resolution and effective management of conflicts by engaging state and non-state actors in exploring collaborative approaches to bring lasting peace in the Greater Horn of Africa and beyond." APFO conducts much of its work through collaborative approaches. Its team of experts consists of a diverse group of professionals, researchers and practitioners. The team is drawn from civil society organizations, academic and research institutions in the region and beyond all bringing together a unique combination of qualifications and experiences.
2. [Peace Initiative Network \(PIN\)](#) - [Nigeria](#) ([Western Africa](#)) - PIN is a non-governmental, non-partisan in politics and religion, charitable organization based in Kano, Nigeria. Since its inception in 2004, PIN has committed itself irrevocably to peacebuilding and development in Nigeria through advocacy, capacity development, sport and, participatory research. PIN has contributed actively in raising the awareness of member of communities in Northern Nigeria, especially young people to the use of non-violent strategies as a proactive tool and response to conflict through peace education and sport programs.



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[Please click here for further information on how to join the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)

2) GCCT Members in Focus – Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) from Afghanistan

Afghanistan's strategic geographic location and ethnic diversity has resulted in decades of wars, deriving from both external and internal causes, including the US-led invasion and subsequent insurgency.

As Kirthi Jayakumar writes:

"Afghanistan has always been a passageway for the world's great power in their pursuit from the Occident to the Orient – be it for the Silk Route, The Great Game during the colonial era or for the many proxy wars fought throughout the years. Much of Afghanistan's ancient history lies in conquests and grandeur, in a world of Kings and Empires."

Since 1996, Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) has been engaged in local peacebuilding and high-quality research, with the aim of “replacing violence as a cultural norm in Afghanistan, and developing lasting and sustainable cultures of peace, built on a human infrastructure of people committed to engendering a progressive climate of peace within the social fabric and inter communal life of Afghanistan.” The organization is proud of its status as the “first Afghan-led, research and peace-building organisation in Afghanistan.”

Over the past decade, CPAU implemented over 400 projects in more than 26 provinces throughout Afghanistan, including education and peacebuilding programmes, research and media project, and peace and conflict management. More than 30,000 students have benefitted from CPAU's workings and training seminars, whilst CPAU has established or worked with some 10,000 Councils (Shuras).

Building Peace Locally - Peace Councils in Afghanistan



To help achieve these aims, CPAU has facilitated the establishment of some 500 Peace Councils through various initiatives, thereby reducing violence and helping improve access to justice.

Through a community-based justice, peace and reintegration project, entitled ‘Building Peace Locally in Kunduz (BPL)’, CPAU helped establish sixty new Peace Councils across four districts. Each Council received conflict resolution trainings, plus workshops on grievance resolution and justice linkages; whilst CPAU oversaw the implementation of tailored communications campaign to help improve levels of knowledge about the Councils.

A key component of the project was the completion of a strategic conflict analysis and justice mapping process of Kunduz Province, conducted by CPAU’s expert research department, which helped further understanding about the underlying trends and causes of conflict in specific locations.

CPAU also supported the establishment of 100 Peace Councils in Nijrab, Tagab and Sorobi, providing trainings in key concepts (such as conflict, violence, peace, development, identity and power), skills (conflict analysis, mediation and negotiation) and strategies (conflict management and resolution).

Assessment of Dutch Integrated Police Training Mission in Kunduz

CPAU is also renowned for its strong research capabilities, using “its community links and networks to undertake various research projects, which reflect the issues of concern to Afghan people directly from the grass-roots level.”



One such assessment is participatory conflict vulnerability analysis (PCVA), conducted in two provinces in northern Afghanistan - Kunduz and Takhar. This research sought to identify problems that increased the vulnerability of individuals and communities, respectively, to violent conflict. CPAU’s conclusions found that insecurity, the collapse of the rule of law and various livelihood-related issues - such as land, water, education and family disputes – were the most common problems.

Aside from contextual analysis of police and formal/informal justice systems in Kunduz, CPAU has been engaged to conduct assessments of the Dutch Integrated Police Training Mission (IPM) in the province. Their research is designed “to identify changes in community perceptions of the

justice system in Kunduz province within the context of the ongoing Dutch mission to build the capacity of rule of law (RoL) institutions”. The research finding help strengthen the capacity building and development of the police and judiciary, thereby further enhancing their partnership with traditional institutions and their roles in the local community.

Fight For Peace (FFP) – the creation of an Afghan Girl’s boxing team

Women have long borne the brunt of war in Afghanistan. As Kirthi Jayakumar writes:

“The Taliban regime in Afghanistan was the proverbial death-knell for progressive lifestyles of women. With the advent of the Taliban, women were denied some of their most basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. The right to life, to work and study, and to access health care – plus freedom of expression, movement and religion – were no longer enjoyed by women. There were instances of women asserting their rights under the Taliban regime, only to be subjected to public stoning, beatings and imprisonment. Women were oppressed and left bereft of the rights inherent to their very existence. Women were not allowed to leave their households unless they had a burqa and had a male member of their family to accompany them.”



Back in 2007, CPAU created what was to become the first Afghan Women’s boxing team, in close conjunction with the Afghan Boxing Federation. By challenging stereotypes about the roles of women in sport and society, CPAU helped further the cause of Women's empowerment in a unique and innovative way. With women unable to participate in sports of any kind until recently, the project attracted a considerable amount of controversy. The achievement of the female boxers, however, has helped them to become ambassadors for women in Afghanistan.

[Learn more about Co-operation for Peace and Unity](#)

3) GCCT Insight and Analysis

This section provides an overview of the insight and analysis produced by members of the GCCT on a variety of conflict and conflict transformation related topics (click on the links below to read the entire article):

1. [Umuganda – a tool for reconciliation in Rwanda](#) - by *Ingvild Gundersen* - The concept of ‘Umuganda’ – which means ‘coming together in common purpose’ – is to promote unity and reconciliation in a society that has been devastated by conflict, genocide and poverty.
2. [Why should we care about Crimea?](#) - by *Gerard M. Gallucci* - Beyond the question of what exactly the Western powers expect of Russia and how likely it is that Russia will meet those expectations there is a more fundamental question that should be asked. Why should the west care what happens with Crimea? What US national interests, for example, are at stake there? What difference would it make if the people of Crimea decide to leave Ukraine – as the Kosovo Albanians did with Serbia – and join Russia.
3. [Rwanda – building an engaged youth twenty years after genocide](#) - by *Ingvild Gundersen* - Rwanda is still in need of healing and reconciliation, and the Rwandan youth still need to reflect on lessons learned from the past in order to construct the future they want and deserve.
4. [Israel’s future as an anachronism](#) - by *David B. Kanin* - Israel is a nineteenth century European project completed neither in the nineteenth century nor in Europe.
5. [US foreign policy and Ukraine](#) - by *Gerard M. Gallucci* - The US might form its policy around building and maintaining multilateral commitment to prevent, diffuse and contain conflicts, using its sense of right and wrong as the basis of a proactive and consistent diplomacy informed by local realities, sensitive to the interests, values and motivations of others and backed up when necessary by the credible threat of force exercised through the UN.
6. [Attacks on education should lead Security Council debate](#) - The Security Council should urge states and armed non-state groups to refrain from using schools for military purposes and incorporate clear protections for schools from military use in their legislation, and military doctrine and policies.
7. [Discovering the commons in Turkey – new media, social movements and social cohesion](#) - by *Derya Yuksek* - The Resistance has been a turning point in enabling society to develop a new understanding of itself: as a society that is open to all. It was not the representatives of various classes or ideologies on the streets; it was the people – even those without an established ideology – who marched down the streets with their “citizen” identity.

8. [Discovering the commons in Turkey – conflict as a means of transcending societal divides](#) - by *Derya Yuksek* - The Gezi events showed that new social movements have a significant potential to act as a forum for dialogue and unite different segments of the society under the commons; demonstrating how a conflict itself may actually be a means for transcending societal divides and moving towards social cohesion.
9. [Ukraine – a stake for the long run](#) - by *David B. Kanin* - The West is stuck in reactive mode to what it perceives as a Crimean crisis; it needs instead to prepare for a strategic competition with Russia of unforeseeable duration for influence over Ukraine.
10. [The United Nations and its peacekeeping dilemma](#) - by *Maurício Vieira* - The deployment of a UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), authorized to undertake “all necessary measures” to neutralize armed groups, represents an important step in the evolution of UN peacekeeping missions.
11. [Bosnia – the country as wreckage](#) - by *David B. Kanin* - Protests over identity cards and economic anguish once again have shown that – by themselves – neither street action nor breathless rhetoric from full-time activists or outside commentators can overcome the basic structural underpinnings of informal, patronage based social and economic networks.
12. [The Omani experiment](#) - by *Artin H. Arslanian* - The Oman of Sultan Qaboos represents a case study of modernization and political development initiated from the top. But unlike the case of Kemal’s Turkey, the changes have come incrementally and at a very slow pace.
13. [What do the local election results whisper about the future of Turkish democracy?](#) - by *Dr. Ulas Doga Eralp* - Local election results confirmed that Turkey is going through a belated, yet organic democratic transition. In absence of Turkish military’s looming shadow, the liberals and social democrats are learning to own the process rather than merely follow.
14. [Protesting in Bosnia and Herzegovina – voiceless citizens and the breakdown of representation](#) - by *Martino Bianchi* - The reasonable and legitimate concerns of the population are today passing through two different bottlenecks – the arguably negative reaction of political parties and the dramatic absence of political actors able and willing to structure this discontent.

**[To contribute analysis and insight to TransConflict.com,
please contact us by clicking here.](#)**

4) GCCT Activities, Research and Requests

New project by PATRIR and CPAU

The [Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania \(PATRIR\)](#) - in partnership with [Cooperation for Peace and Unity Afghanistan \(CPAU\)](#) - are announcing the launch of a project, entitled “Achieving the MDGs through Peacebuilding: Capacity building in transition to democracy, community based-dialogue and peacekeeping operations for international, national and local actors in Afghanistan”.

The project is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania through its Official Development Assistance budget and is implemented by PATRIR and CPAU, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme – Bratislava Regional Centre.

The project takes place in the period December 2013-November 2014, in Afghanistan and Romania.

The objective of the project is to strengthen state, civil society and UN capacity for peacebuilding, peace consolidation and violence prevention in Afghanistan in the aftermath of violent conflict. The project will assess and engage with key state, civil society, UN, and other relevant institutions in Afghanistan, to evaluate and support/strengthen their capacity for effective peace consolidation, managing the transition from ‘peacekeeping/peace enforcement’ to peacemaking and peace consolidation, and to support the development of targeted programming and measures for violence prevention.

The project will a) identify, evaluate and assess capacity and institutional development support for peacebuilding, peace consolidation and violence prevention to Afghan state and civil society actors; b) assess from Afghan and international experts and stakeholders current and future capacity needs; and c) design a core module and materials on peacebuilding and peace support operations for select state and non-state Afghan experts.

The project and all materials will be customised for the situation, needs and context in Afghanistan. PATRIR and CPAU will also draw upon contextualised knowledge of the needs and situation in Afghanistan plus – as appropriate – relevant international expertise in transitions and the key role of national (state and civil society capacity).

More information about the project can be found on PATRIR’s [website](#) or on the Facebook page, ‘Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan’.

As part of the project, an assessment of the peacebuilding and peace consolidation capacity building and training needs, achievement and lessons learned within Afghanistan is being conducted, in order to develop customized, demand-based and locally owned capacity building/training programmes in selected thematic areas. The project is implemented with the financial assistance of Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the Official Development Assistance budget, in partnership with UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre. You can access the survey by [clicking here](#).

International Peace and Development Training Center (IPDTC) training courses

TransConflict is pleased to present information about new training courses offered by the International Peace and Development Training Center (IPDTC), which was established by the [Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania \(PATRIR\)](#).

Background

The International Peace and Development Training Center (IPDTC) is inviting expert professionals, policy makers and practitioners for its upcoming Spring Onsite Programs. The programmes are designed for UN agencies, governments and national and international organisations. IPDTC programmes have been ranked by participants and their agencies as amongst the most professional, intensive and high quality in their field. They provide participants with the opportunity to train together with an exceptional group of experts and practitioners from around the world, coming from governments, community-based, national and international organisations, military and security forces, donors and others. The programmes are thorough, rigorous and dynamic, drawing upon lessons learnt in the field and training people in practical skills, knowledge and capabilities to directly improve their own and their organisations capacities for peacebuilding, prevention and post-war recovery, designing of peace programmes and peace support operations.

- [Collaborative Approaches to Diversity in Conflict Settings \(May 5-9\)](#)
- [Systemic Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation and Recovery and Reconciliation \(June 9-13\)](#)
- Developing and Applying Early Warning and Early Response Systems: Challenges and Responses (June 16-20)

IPDTC Programmes are specifically created for senior leadership, government officials, conflict parties, experts and practitioners in the field.

If you know organizations, agencies, ministries or individuals which you believe may benefit from these programmes, please share this announcement further with them or send them directly to IPDTC's web-site at www.patrir.ro/training or write to training@patrir.ro

Members of the GCCT are entitled to a 15% discount!

[If you are interested in sharing information about projects, research, training courses or other activities, please do not hesitate to contact us by clicking here!](#)

5) GCCT Advocacy

Civilian casualties - what counts?

Norah Niland, former head of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan's Human Right's Unit, explores a new report and recommendations from the Oxford Research Group on the potential role of the UN in the future recording of civilian casualties.

There is an urgent need to move productively to enhance the protection of war-affected communities with the strategic use of data that indicates who is dying and in what circumstances.

Humanity has a long history of reverting to warfare to settle disputes. It has an equally long history of espousing norms geared to safeguarding the lives of civilians and others not engaged in armed hostilities.

Over time, the methods and means of warfare have changed, as have the diversity of attitudes – on and off the battlefield – to the issue of civilian casualties. On the one hand, the slaughter and deliberate suffering of war- besieged communities in settings such as 2009 Sri Lanka and present-day Syria show the extent to which the disrespect for, or destruction of, civilian lives are used as a weapon to advance military objectives. In contrast to such blatant disregard for the lives of non-combatants, the majority of citizens everywhere are antagonistic to deliberate or incidental loss of life whatever the rationale or modalities of warfare.

Afghanistan is but one example that shows that history is on the side of those who struggle to safeguard the lives of civilians. The majority of Afghans were, unsurprisingly, indignant at the huge and persistent loss of life as the armed conflict in 2007 morphed into a spreading insurgency and intensifying warfare with a corresponding rise in civilian casualties. The human rights team of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan which at this time began to systematically investigate incidents involving civilian casualties, benefitted greatly from the widespread desire of Afghans to be free of the direct impact of a war that was deadly and devastating for many. From an early point, UNAMA's initiative to mobilize productive attention to the human costs of war benefitted from a mushrooming of "accidental activists" who included, for example, a teenager who used his cell phone to record the deaths of infants killed in an [**airstrike in Shindand**](#), Herat province in western Afghanistan, August 2008.

Activists and informal or spontaneous networks grew in number as it became clear to Afghans that routine and public analysis by the United Nations on patterns of harm could help inform attitudes and decision-making directly related to the tactics employed by different warring parties. Within the UN, it quickly became apparent that evidence-based advocacy – utilizing data and analysis that was irrefutable – allowed for discussions and dialogue with warring parties and other concerned actors that went beyond "lobbying" to reduce the incidence of civilian casualties.

It was of significant importance that the UN's initiative to record and report on casualties was impartial and seen to be so. As noted at the time, the focus was on "saving lives and not taking

sides”. This approach helped tremendously in terms of both public and private interactions with different sets of stakeholders, including pro-government forces and the armed opposition.

It was also important that efforts to enhance the protection of civilians, with the use of unassailable data, were organized in a transparent and objective manner. The rigorous use of a tightly managed fact-finding methodology, while simultaneously protecting sources, contributed to the credibility of reporting. Disaggregated data and analysis of civilian casualty trends facilitated collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders such as parliamentarians, community leaders, and other entities engaged in assisting those displaced by war or survivors in need of help to rebuild shattered lives and means of livelihoods.



Having experienced firsthand the value of using systematic and credible data to help reduce the incidence of warfare detrimental to the lives of civilians, I find it very exciting to read the [report and recommendations](#) of the [Oxford Research Group](#) on the potential role of the UN in the future recording of civilian casualties. It is encouraging to see the high level of interest in this topic and the energy invested in learning from diverse experiences to-date.

Unquestionably, there is an urgent need to move productively to enhance the protection of war-affected communities with the strategic use of data that indicates who is dying and in what circumstances. There are, also, important ethical reasons to routinely record the deaths of all who die as a result of armed hostilities.

It is crucial that bureaucratic inertia does not dilute or divert attention away from the urgency of developing an agreed formula to routinely track and analyze patterns of harm that result in civilian casualties. It is important that perceived institutional prerogatives do not delay or distort the organization of infrastructure that works to the benefit of war-affected individuals and communities. Moving forward, it is also important that the nature of contemporary conflicts, and emerging technological innovations including the use of autonomous weapons that are transforming and expanding traditional notions of warzones and battlefields, are borne in mind.

Civilians caught in conflict or endangered by the use of armed violence in settings as diverse as the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Baluchistan, southern Thailand, Egypt or Somalia need the commitment and creativity of all who are rightly concerned at the loss of life that, often, could be avoided. It is well understood that data alone will not save lives. There is a crucial need for strong and sustained political commitment to leverage data on war deaths in a way that facilitates or compels respect for long-standing norms that define our common humanity.

The [ORG report](#) is an important contribution to building on the momentum inherent in the reality of accidental activists who use their ingenuity and revolutionary information technology to call attention to the loss of life or unmitigated suffering wherever it is occurring. As the report notes, different organizational and technological issues need to be addressed but such problems should not prove difficult to resolve if the focus remains on saving lives and using casualty recording to enhance the protection of those at imminent risk.

Norah Niland has spent much of her professional life with the United Nations, both in the field and at HQ on humanitarian, human rights, and development issues in crisis and transition environments. Norah was the Director of human rights in UNAMA and Representative of the UN High Commissioner for HR (2008-2010) when the initiative to reduce the impact of the war on civilians involving the systematic collection, analysis, and dialogue on trends involving casualties, was launched. Currently, Norah is a Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.

The following reports are available to download:

- [The UN and casualty recording: Good practice and the need for action, Oxford Research Group](#)
- [Counting the cost: Casualty recording practices and realities around the world, Action on Armed Violence](#)

[Please click here to learn more about the Charter for the Recognition of Every Casualty of Armed Violence.](#)



[Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)

6) Follow the GCCT and the TransConflict

To follow the GCCT, please click on one of the following buttons:



To follow TransConflict, please click on one of the following buttons:



[Click here to add your name to TransConflict's e-Declaration in support of the principles of conflict transformation!](#)

