



Concept Note

Human Rights, Peace and Security

Wednesday 15 – Friday 17 January 2020 | WP1725

Wiston House

Summary

This [Wilton Park](#) roundtable provides an opportunity to explore the nexus between human rights, and peace and security. The event will provide an off the record space to discuss practical ways in which to bring human rights into the heart of the security framework, with an emphasis on conflict prevention. This 'invitation only' expert roundtable is being developed in partnership with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Context and key policy issues

"Perhaps the best prevention tool we have is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – and the treaties that derive from it. The rights set out in it identify many of the root causes of conflict, but equally they provide real world solutions through real change on the ground." These words from Secretary-General António Guterres (Human Rights Council 2017) describe the important link between the UN frameworks supporting human rights on the one hand and peace and security on the other.

In the 2016 'twin' resolutions on Sustaining Peace, member states of the Security Council and the General Assembly recognised that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Secretary-General Guterres has made prevention a priority across the work of the United Nations, calling it the common thread running through the three reform streams of the organisation. The ongoing reforms aim to improve coherence across the three pillars, namely development, human rights and peace and security, in order to provide timely support to build resilience at national and regional levels to a broad array of risks that could undermine efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.¹

The 15th conference in the annual human rights series, will focus on human rights in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding/sustaining peace. Within its scope, the conference will address this interlinkage between human rights and the security framework from the perspectives of policy-makers and practitioners.

In particular, the meeting seeks to build on the Government of Switzerland-led [13th June Appeal](#), placing human rights at the heart of conflict prevention. The Appeal, which was supported by 71 states², calls for the Human Rights Council to play a more prominent role in conflict prevention, involving itself at every stage of the prevention continuum. The conference will build on the recent call for Member States to enhance exchanges and communications between the Human Rights Council and the rest of the UN system, and thereby bridging the gap between different entities of the UN.

¹ See: Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, 30 May 2019, A/73/890–S/2019/448, p.3

² Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay.

The conference will follow current developments of increasing emphasis on the role of human rights in the context of resilience, and the subsequent importance of embedding human rights further into the security framework. During the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly in 2018 the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, echoed these sentiments stating, "Human rights are the interlocking elements that build resilient and confident societies." As the discourse on security expands to incorporate additional elements and issues related to human life, resilience has the potential to construct a new security paradigm, locating human rights firmly within its remit.

Format and objectives

The participatory format of the meeting, encompassing roundtable discussion during plenary sessions plus time spent in smaller breakout groups and informal exchanges in the margins of the meeting, are designed to generate fresh insights and analysis. It will be held on the basis of non-attributable discussion in a neutral environment designed for the promotion of open and constructive exchange in order to:

- Identify practical ways in which to integrate human rights into conflict prevention
- Enhance understanding of how human rights frameworks can contribute to sustaining peace
- Rethink human rights within the context of mediation and peace-making negotiations
- Strengthen links among key agencies and actors, particularly across a spectrum of policy-makers and frontline practitioners
- Generate the emergence of expert networks to take forward emerging actions and proposals

Cross cutting themes will include women's rights and gender equality.

Who should participate?

This Wilton Park dialogue will convene up to 55 people drawn from: key donor countries including, but not limited to, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; a selection of affected countries and/ or regions including representatives from eg Colombia, Kosovo, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, the Middle East and South East Asia; policy makers (Geneva and New York); human rights defenders and experts; field practitioners, analysts and opinion formers; business; relevant international and regional bodies.

Outcomes

Meeting outcomes will be captured in a report summarising the discussions, conclusions, policy recommendations, and proposed actions. The report will be widely circulated to interested parties and posted on Wilton Park and other websites.

Monitoring and evaluation

Wilton Park's Monitoring and Evaluation process includes follow-up with all participants, speakers and partners on planned actions. An electronic questionnaire will be completed by all participants during the meeting and a further survey conducted 3-6 months after the event.

Communications

Our Communications Team will develop a communications strategy to promote the themes of the event and maximise outcomes.

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