

**Concept note**

11.04.2021

**Workshop held by Regional Programme Gulf States at KAS (RPG) and Yemen Policy Center (YPC) on “Civil Society Engagement in a Ceasefire Support Mechanism”**

On 17 September 2020, a joint communiqué by the foreign minister of Germany, Heiko Maas, along with his counterparts from Sweden and the UK reiterated their full support to the efforts of OSESGY, Martin Griffiths, to facilitate an agreement between the Yemeni parties on a Joint Declaration comprised of a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic relief measures and the resumption of a comprehensive, and an inclusive political process to end the six-year-old war in Yemen and achieve sustained peace.

Lessons from other civil war contexts, as Catherine Barnes explains, suggest that civil society actors can act as a force to mobilize people for war by the belligerent parties and they can be a power to bring about peace. Intellectuals, education and religious institutions, tribal leaders, civic associations, philanthropies, and business organizations as well as media can provide the moral justification for the war and shape people’s perception about it. This is especially true when civil society is not autonomous and/or is divided along ethnic and sectarian lines.

However, in cases where civil society is autonomous and inclusive, it can play a crucial role in bringing about peace. When individuals are members of multiple CSOs that each one of them is working on certain aspects related to their community, they bring people together, create space for dialogue, and build a sense of one community. This social capital can be used to bring about peace and sustain it. Where civil society enjoys some autonomy and the social capital it generates is coming from cross-cutting memberships of CSOs that transcends the ethnic, sectarian, and ideological lines, it can be an agent for peace during the different stages of a conflict. In the early stage of the conflict, it can prevent it by addressing its root causes. During the conflict, it can bring about peace by facilitating communication between the belligerents. And after the conflict, it can sustain peace through raising awareness of the cost of the war.

While there is no substitute for the direct negotiations between the warring parties to end an ongoing war, engaging civil society in the process of peacebuilding proved to be important because it can facilitate and mediate negotiations between the warring parties, and generate alternatives for them. In cases where a ceasefire is achieved between belligerents, civil society as Margaux Pinaud explains can support peace processes in four ways:

- Exposing noncompliance to ceasefire commitments
- Facilitating communication within and between conflict parties
- Promoting peace process issues among warring parties
- Socializing outside spoilers and raising public awareness about ceasefires

Studies on civil society in Yemen prior to the 2011 uprising have shown that the state had penetrated and co-opted many CSOs. However, much has changed since the 2011 uprising. The collapse of Ali Abdullah Saleh regime brought about a proliferation of many autonomous CSOs, which despite the eruption of the civil war in 2014, remained active. Evidently, there are many CSOs that proliferate along regional and sectarian lines or co-opted by external actors, but the bulk of CSOs in Yemen have an interest in ending the war and promoting peace.

In order to generate knowledge on how the inclusion of civil society actors positively impacts the process of peacebuilding and the likelihood a ceasefire may hold, the Regional Gulf State Program (RPG) at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the Yemen Polling Center (YPC) are holding a 2-day workshop on this topic.



The workshop will bring experts who have worked extensively on the role of civil society during periods of conflict and conflict resolution. A special focus of the workshop will be dedicated to the role of civil society actors in sustaining a ceasefire when it is achieved between the belligerent parties. Using case studies, when it is possible, the experts will shed light on the role of civil society in peacebuilding including its role in maintaining a ceasefire. The experts also will highlight cases where civil society was not included in the process of peacebuilding and/or was included but failed to generate the required outcome of upholding a ceasefire and sustain peace.

KAS and YPC will disseminate the knowledge produced by this workshop to Yemen CSOs and the international organizations that are interested in bringing about peace in Yemen.

# Civil Society Engagement in a Ceasefire Mechanism in Yemen

19 May from 15:00-16:30 GMT

20 May from 15:00-16:30 GMT

Via Zoom

Register in advance here: <https://kas-de.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJltc-6hqDgqGNfsUwcCaiadN9iz59Gn8ak1>

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## Wednesday, May 19, 2021

15.00 – 15.10

### Opening remarks

**Mr. Fabian Blumberg**

Regional Representative to the Gulf States at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

**Hadil al-Mowafak**

Research Fellow and Consultant at Yemen Policy Center

15.10 – 15.15

### Remarks on a ceasefire mechanism in Yemen

**Ana Kantor**

Security Sector Reform Officer at Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretariat General for Yemen, OSESGY

15.15 – 15.25

### Co-creating our future: civil society roles in silencing the guns and setting the agenda for more inclusive political settlements

**Dr. Catherine Barnes**

An affiliate faculty member of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University and a freelance practitioner and researcher, VA, U.S.

15.25 – 15.35

### Top-down and bottom-up approach to peace building

**Dr. Roger Mac Ginty**

Professor in Defence, Development and Diplomacy at the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University

- 15.35 – 15.45 **The prospects and limitations of civil society solutions in Africa**  
**Dr. Ian Spears**  
Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Guelph, Canada
- 15.45 – 15.55 **Role of civil society in ceasefire monitoring: comparative experiences from around the globe**  
**Dr. Thania Paffenholz**  
Executive Director, Inclusive Peace, Geneva
- 15.55 – 16.05 **Perspective on the role of Yemen’s CSOs in the current civil war**  
**Dr. Vincent Durac**  
Associate Professor of Middle East Politics, School of Politics and International Relations at University College Dublin
- 16.05 – 16.30 **Discussion**
- Moderator Day 1 **Simon Engelkes**  
Policy Advisor for Middle East and North Africa at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

## **Thursday, May 20, 2021**

- 15.00 – 15.10 **The role of civil in the Philippines and Colombia Peace processes**  
**Dr. Kristian Herbolzheimer**  
Director of the International Catalan Institute for Peace, Barcelona, Spain
- 15.10 – 15.20 **Lessons from the experience of Civil Society in Nepal**  
**Ms. Margaux Pinaud**  
PhD Candidate at the Humanitarianism and Conflict Response Institute, Manchester University, UK
- 15.20 – 15.30 **Lessons from the experience of Civil society in Lebanon**  
**Dr. Paul Kingston**  
Director, Centre for Critical Development Studies. Professor of Political Science and Global Development Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough, Toronto, Canada

15.30 – 15.40	<b>Learned Lessons from Sudan’s Wars in South Sudan and Darfur</b> <b>Dr. Jihad Mashamoun</b> Freelance Researcher and Political Analyst on Sudan’s Civil-Military Relations, Foreign Policy, and Security Affairs, Exeter, UK.	Page 3/3
15.40 – 15.50	<b>Role of civil society in Afghanistan</b> <b>Dr. Ellinor Zeino</b> Country Director Afghanistan, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung	
15.50 – 16.20	<b>Discussion</b>	
16.20 – 16.30	<b>Closing remarks</b>	
Moderator Day 2	<b>Mohamed al-Iriani</b> Research Fellow at Yemen Policy Center	

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