



Integrating Human Rights, Nonviolent Action & Peacebuilding to Sustain Peace

This panel, organized by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Berghof Foundation and the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), discussed how we can integrate human rights, nonviolent action and peacebuilding to sustain peace by bridging the silos and shifting the mindset of how civil society participates through nonviolent action and peacebuilding.

Too often, elite peacebuilding processes are not effective or sustainable because of an imbalance in power; and this is often because civil society is left out of the processes, with root causes of violence – often equating to abuses of human rights left out as well. Furthermore, those calling themselves peacebuilders at the grassroots level are at times stigmatized for ‘betraying’ the cause by talking to the so called ‘opposition’. Conversely human rights discourse is often felt as a ‘naming and shaming’ exercise, and an intrusion into sovereign affairs at the multilateral level.

Nonviolent action through which human rights are upheld helps to correct some of this and is an essential strategy for inclusive peace processes – bringing communities of practice together. Nonviolent action is important to peacebuilding because it seeks balance with opponents through tactics aimed at leveraging people power and increasing public awareness. Peacebuilding skills are important to nonviolent action because they are useful in building a strong coalition of diverse groups and finding creative options to end violent conflict.

Civil society groups use their human rights to assembly and free speech, for example, to reinforce human rights to peace and human security. At the local level in Kenya, local civil society uses a combination of nonviolent action and peacebuilding skills to pursue human rights.

At the multilateral level, silos remain. Human rights mechanisms, notably the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), are by and large not yet leveraged by peace and security actors in order to better identify root causes of violence, to prevent the outbreak of violence and sustain peace.

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The panel also mentioned new publications on this topic: the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) report [Powering to Peace: Integrated Civil Resistance and Peacebuilding Strategies](#), the US Institute of Peace action guides [Synergizing Nonviolent Action and Peacebuilding \(SNAP\)](#) and [Integrating Human Rights and Sustaining Peace: exploring the Universal Periodic Review](#).