



# bicc

**bicc**  
Born International Centre for Conflict Studies

annual report 2023

We thank our Supervisory Board,  
our International Board, our Partners  
and Funders for their trust in our  
work and their joint commitment to  
a more peaceful world.

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

CONRAD SCHETTER



It has been a long time since the world seemed so far from peace as it is today. War, violent and authoritarian assertion of power and social exclusion rather than cooperation are the new formulas for political action. Democracy and peace seem to be on the retreat in all regions of the world. bicc has been researching these disturbing developments for a long time and is trying to counteract these tendencies and strengthen peaceful forms of coexistence by providing targeted advice to political and civil society actors.

Research on protracted violent conflicts is at the core of our work. bicc has exceptional expertise in this area, as we have been conducting research on important conflict hotspots for many years and have the necessary technical, regional, and linguistic competence. We are very pleased that this expertise is in great demand by the media, politicians and practitioners: In the case of Afghanistan, for example,

bicc is involved in political processes in a variety of ways (including research and evaluation) > [PAGE 10](#) and > [PAGE 33](#) and advises political decision-makers > [PAGE 32](#).

In the case of Ukraine, bicc is one of the most important voices in Germany and develops concrete recommendations for action for German policy > [PAGE 34](#). bicc has always paid particular attention to Sub-Saharan Africa. The numerous military coups in Africa in the recent past illustrate the disturbing development that the population considers the military, rather than the democratic government, the competent body for ensuring peace and order in the country. In this context, bicc is researching the violent conflicts in the western Sahel. Despite the military's seizure of power, violence fuelled by jihadist groups continues to increase and destabilise an entire region > [PAGE 30](#). Research into the consequences of violent conflicts is another long-

established area of work at bicc. This concerns first and foremost forced displacement, the effects of which have even affected German domestic policy. By posing the question under which conditions refugees can return home, bicc seeks to develop concrete solutions for existing refugee situations > [PAGE 48](#). Too often, we forget that refugees want to return to their home countries if this is possible in a safe and humane way.

Indeed, bicc continues to work in a solution-oriented and practical way. We do not give up hope for peace—even if this is only possible on a small scale. In this context, the HDP Nexus project > [PAGE 34](#) is worth mentioning, in which we are investigating what notions of peace there are in local communities and how these can be better considered in providing development and humanitarian aid. For example, many societies have their own concept of peace that the international community just needs to be made

aware of. Finally, the social division in Germany due to extremist tendencies is worrying. In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, bicc plays a central role in bringing academics working on tendencies that threaten democracy together in a fruitful dialogue and in preparing their research findings for policy and practice > [PAGE 16](#).

As these examples of our work make clear, bicc is a place where we deal with profound conflicts, relate them to each other and try to develop feasible solutions to situations that seem hopeless. We owe this opportunity for research and consultancy to the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, which has supported us financially for 29 years. We would like to express our gratitude to them and to all the other generous supporters of our research and advisory projects.

**"We do not give up hope for peace—even if this is only possible on a small scale."**

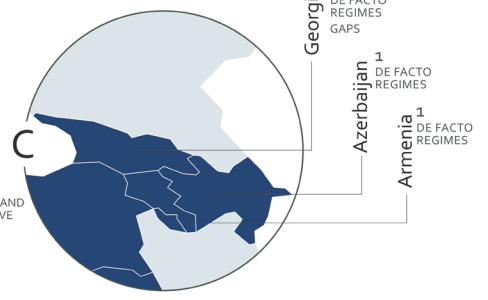
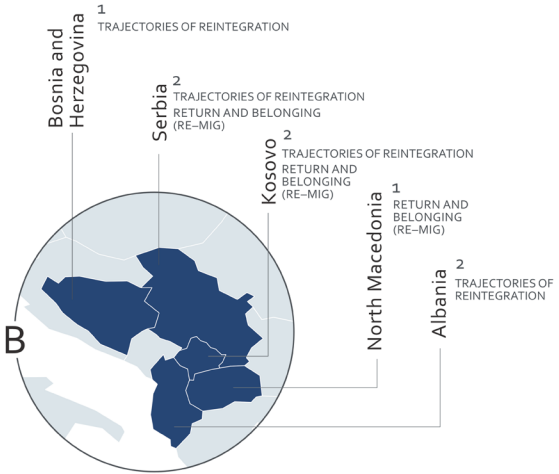
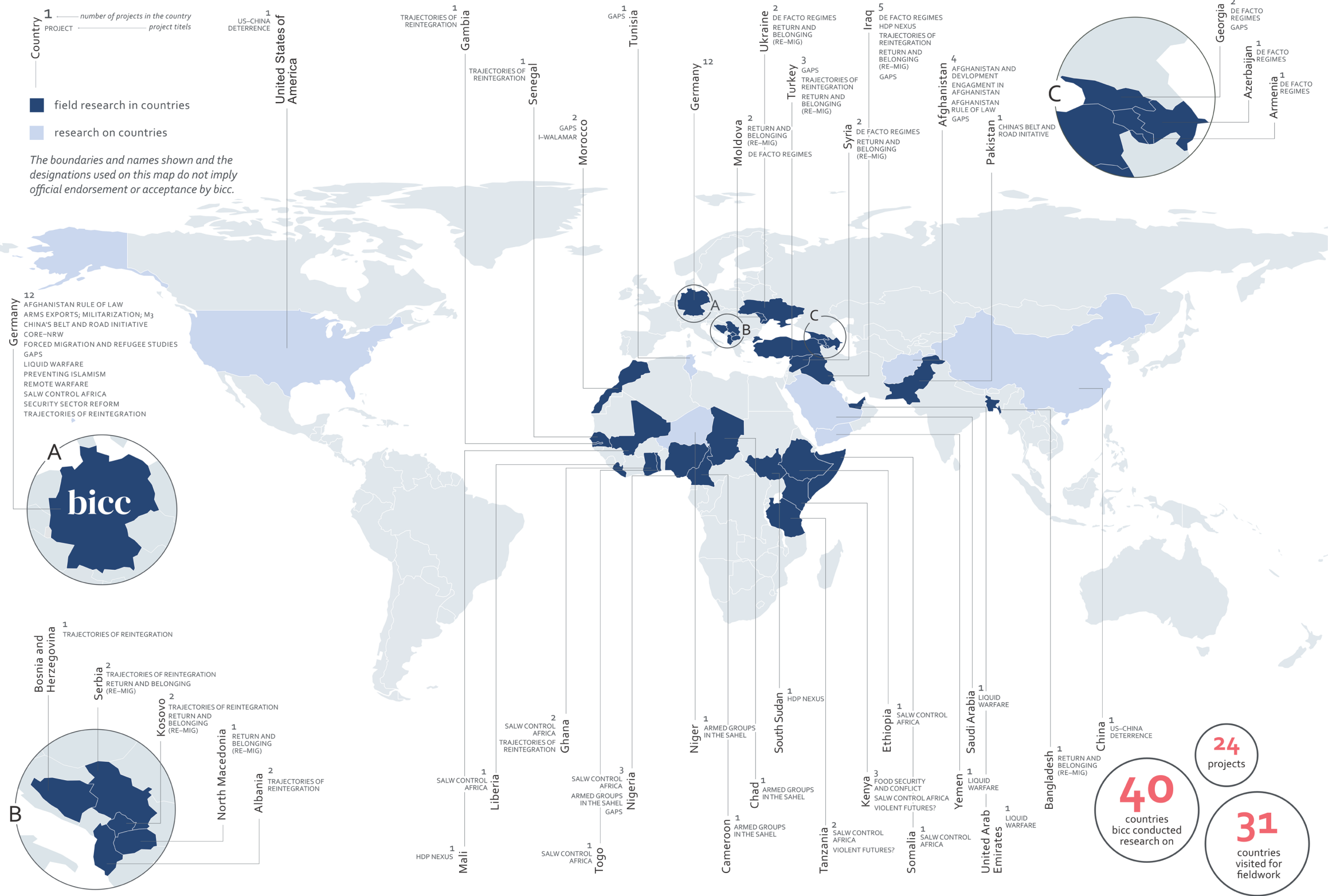
# GLOBAL REACH

Country 1 — number of projects in the country  
PROJECT — project titles

United States of America 1  
US-CHINA DETERRENCE

■ field research in countries  
■ research on countries

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by bicc.



24 projects

40 countries bicc conducted research on

31 countries visited for fieldwork

# BUILDING PEACE & SOCIAL COHESION

This topic brings together bicc's research on the tensions and potentials for peace within societies. Projects within this topic aim to understand actor experiences and perceptions to identify common or competing visions of peace and social cohesion.



# HOW CAN THE HDP NEXUS SUCCEED?

NGOS BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AID, DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND PEACEBUILDING



- Completing 11 weeks of field research in Iraq, Mali and South Sudan with 126 qualitative interviews
- Completing the analysis of the humanitarian and peacebuilding activities of our partners in Iraq, Mali and South Sudan
- Realising workshops with our partners in Iraq, Mali and South Sudan, as well as local researchers

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PARTNERS

International Rescue Committee (IRC), Malteser International, Welthungerhilfe (WHH)

### FUNDERS

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

### COUNTRIES

Iraq, Mali, South Sudan

### DURATION

11/2021–10/2024

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The HDP (humanitarian–development–peace) nexus is a policy and practice to better link humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding activities of aid organisations in settings of war and protracted crises.

While borne of good intention, the different mandates of NGOs in these three fields do not always complement one another or, at worst, clash. Local concepts of conflict resolution and approaches to humanitarian assistance, development and peace in the Global South can also differ from those of the Global North. The question then arises: How does the HDP nexus contribute to building peace in local communities?

To address this question, this project investigates the experiences and perspectives of local communities and NGOs working in HDP projects in Iraq, South Sudan and Mali. So far, we find that in HDP projects, there is no regular monitoring of how HDP activities impact local conflict dynamics. We argue that HDP nexus projects need to consider local understandings of conflict and locally existing peace potentials to succeed.

The HDP project adopts a qualitative approach based on several months of fieldwork per country (two months in three localities each). bicc researchers interview individuals from local communities as well as staff of our HDP-implementing INGO partners and their local NGO counterparts. The bicc project team is also developing an HDP app to support implementing HDP projects in the future.

### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Esther Meininghaus (project leader), Rolf Alberth, Rodrigo Bolaños Suárez, Hien Giang, Boubacar Haidara, Birgit Kemmerling, Marie Müller-Koné, Conrad Schetter

# AFGHANISTAN & DEVELOPMENT

ADVICE ON HUMANITARIAN, SECURITY AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES



bicc provides expert advice on Afghanistan for the Regional Department of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Since the Taliban took power on 15 August 2021, the question of how development cooperation should be conducted with Afghanistan remains unanswered. This question gives rise to many development, security and social challenges, including the exclusion of women which policymakers must address. Our advice considers current developments in Afghanistan and relates them to the needs of German development policy. We prepare related inputs and offer space for reflecting on how the identified developments might affect Germany's future engagement with Afghanistan.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Conrad Schetter (project leader), Frangis Dadfar Spanta, Katja Mielke, Susanne Schmeidl

bicc acts as

- a knowledge facilitator for evidence-based decision-making in complex situations
- a sparring partner for the BMZ
- an initiator of internal reflections to support the BMZ's internal learning process.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Scenario analysis "Visions and Scenarios for Aid Cooperation of the BMZ in Afghanistan" (2023)
- Hosting and facilitating two working groups at the BMZ/G7 Dialogue Forum Strengthening Civil Society in Afghanistan, 24 November 2022
- Joint workshops and exchange formats with BMZ, implementing organisations and (I)NGOs
- Facilitation of reflection sessions with BMZ desk 321

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### PARTNER

Susanne Schmeidl

### FUNDER

German Development Cooperation (GIZ)

### COUNTRY

Afghanistan

### DURATION

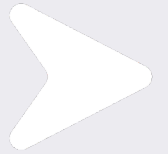
09/2022–07/2023

## PUBLICATIONS



Schetter, C. (2022). Who are 'the' Taliban? Life Worlds between Pashtun Traditions, Islamism, and Globalisation. *Ethnoscripts* 24(1), 62–80.

bicc  
bonus  
track



20  
23

Peace is  
a long way off /  
peace report

PEACE REPORT 2023

# PEACE IS A LONG WAY OFF

2023 / Noch in lange  
kein Frieden

READ ON



Bayer, M. et al. (2023).  
*Zeitenwende für die  
Friedenspolitik? Optionen und  
Handlungsspielräume*. In:  
bicc, IFSH, INEF, & PRIF  
(Eds.). (2024). *Friedens-  
gutachten 2023: Welt ohne  
Kompass*. (pp. 21-38).  
transcript.

## SCOPE FOR PEACE POLICY ACTION IN THE NEW ERA | 'ZEITENWENDE'

What are the consequences of last year's change of course in security policy on the peace policy agenda of our time? Is the turnaround in security policy also a paradigm shift in peace policy? This focus chapter sheds light on central fields of German peace policy one and a half years after the start of the war in Ukraine.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine marks the beginning of a new era in peace and security policy: a phase in which the focus is on continued military support for Ukraine and Europe's future defense capability. The package of security policy measures launched at short notice by the German government in February 2022 does not herald a turning point. A turning point – understood as a break with an old era – must be understood more comprehensively and actively shaped.

## HOW TO SHAPE A STRONG PEACE POLICY

- 1 Push forward with effective arms procurement reforms
- 2 Enshrine a restrictive arms export policy in law
- 3 Rethink defense within the alliance
- 4 Reform the financing of the United Nations
- 5 Implement the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General
- 6 Initiate an ecological turnaround
- 7 Avoid double standards
- 8 Promote a resource-rich and independent development policy
- 9 Maintain contacts with Russian society

PUBLISHERS





# IDDRS REVISION

SUPPORTING THE UN IN OPERATIONALIZING AND DISSEMINATING THE REVISED INTEGRATED DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION STANDARDS



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Supporting the UN in preparing the 4th Report of the Secretary-General on DDR
- Co-developing a Training-of-Trainers course on the revised IDDRS
- Co-creating a webinar series with the African Union, the United Nations and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, bringing together DDR practitioners from the African continent

### PARTNERS

UN Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peace Operations, DDR Section, UN Interagency Working Group on DDR

### FUNDER

German Federal Foreign Office (AA)

### COUNTRY

not applicable

### DURATION

01/2021–12/2022

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Standards of performance can be critical to success—they set a baseline of excellence on complex issues. This is why bicc supported the United Nations (UN) over the past two years in revising and disseminating the latest version of its Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), launched in November 2022.

The UN Integrated DDR Standards—first published in 2006—set a baseline for policy and practice on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) in post-conflict contexts. They aimed to harmonise the approach of some 27 UN agencies and improve the effectiveness and impact of UN-led DDR programmes.

To remain relevant in today’s world, the UN Interagency Working Group (IAWG) on DDR launched a comprehensive review of the UN approach and asked bicc to play a key role in this process.

Working directly with the UN Inter-agency Working Group on DDR, bicc participated in the revision process by coordinating

the revisions of modules, operationalising the revised modules and training staff on the revised versions. In the final year of this two-year project, bicc not only contributed to the validation of key IDDRS modules and the development of the IDDRS Operational Guide but also provided technical advice in a number of countries (for example Chad and South Sudan).

### PUBLICATION



4th Report of the Secretary-General on DDR

### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Claudia Breitung (project leader), Milena Berks, Selina Engelberth, Amelie Philipenburg, Joanne Richards

# CoRE-NRW

CONNECTING RESEARCH ON EXTREMISM  
IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA



- Growing of the network to 500 experts from NRW and across Germany
- 14 networking events, five publications and one workshop
- Consolidating CoRE-NRW as a vital knowledge hub and important actor and source within the research and practitioner community

## HIGHLIGHTS

**FUNDER**  
Ministry for Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia (MKW)

**COUNTRY**  
Germany

**DURATION**  
08/2019–07/2024

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

CoRE-NRW is the platform in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to address challenges and risks that (violent) extremism poses to society. It is a multi- and interdisciplinary network that bridges the gap between academic disciplines and between researchers, practitioners and state agencies in a vital knowledge hub.

bicc coordinates the network and identifies knowledge needs and gaps, activates required expertise and knowledge resources in NRW and engages them bilaterally and collectively beyond their expertise to foster cooperation. In this way, the network advances research, advises practitioners and decision-makers and responds to new dynamics and developments of extremist phenomena and radicalised movements.

A prominent tool for networking and information-sharing is the CoRE-NRW monthly newsletter on developments in research and practice. The network also publishes its own publication series with an annual research report, short audit reports (*Kurzgutachten*) addressing specific knowledge gaps and a research paper (*Forschungspapier*), which

gives researchers space to present their latest insights and work. All publications (in German) are accessible via the CoRE-NRW website and bicc homepage, which also offers a publication database and an event calendar. CoRE-NRW also organises meetings and workshops such as the annual network meeting and the “CoRE-NRW-Werkstatt“-series.

## WEBSITE



## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Maurice Döring (project leader), Marc von Boemcken, Susanne Heinke

# PREVENTING ISLAMISM

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD TO THE INTERMINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP



The Scientific Advisory Board to the Interministerial Working Group (IMAG) on preventing Islamism provides scientific knowledge on societal phenomena and current developments in the prevention of radicalisation and advises on acute crises.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: **Conrad Schetter** (project leader),  
Carina Yildirim-Schlüsing

The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Children, Youth, Family, Equality, Refugees and Integration in North Rhine-Westphalia founded the Scientific Advisory Board in 2022. With the chairmanship of Conrad Schetter (2022–2024), bicc took over the coordination of the Board's work.

Appointed to the Board are ten academics who conduct research on topics related to Islamism, including Islamist currents, Islamic religious education, antisemitism, prevention of radicalisation and psychosocial stress in migrant families.

The members advise the IMAG both in terms of content and strategically. In addition, they contribute to the IMAG reports and provide expertise regarding prevention measures in sub-working groups on antisemitism, digitalisation, refugees, and networking.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Advising the ministries on:

- combatting Islamist antisemitism and racism against Muslims
- preventing Islamism and radicalisation online
- coping with Islamism in refugee communities in North Rhine-Westphalia

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### FUNDER

*Ministerium für Kinder, Jugend, Familie, Gleichstellung, Flucht und Integration des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (MKJFGFI)*

### COUNTRY

Germany

### DURATION

01/2023–12/2024

### HOMEPAGE



**bicc's** VISION IS A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD WHERE THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IS PREVENTED, ALLOWING PEOPLE TO LIVE SAFELY, WITH DIGNITY AND IN BALANCE WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

**bicc**

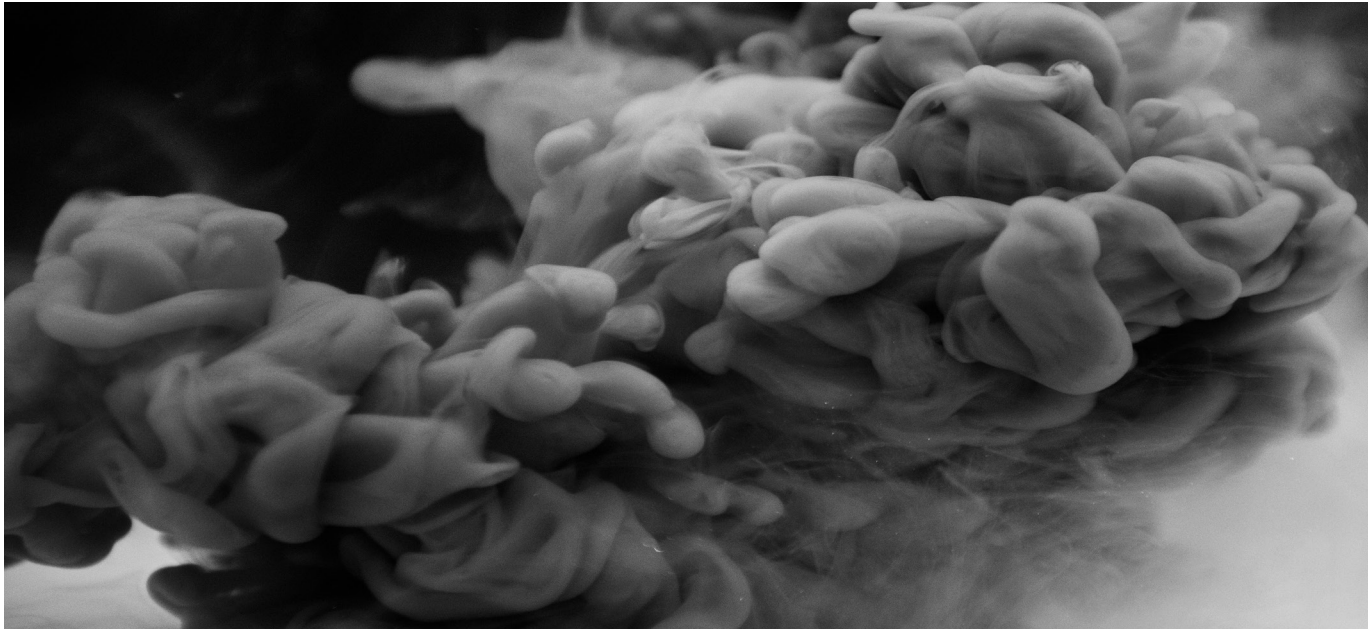
# AGENTS & PATTERNS OF SECURITY & WAR

bicc's research on agents and patterns of security and war looks into the mechanisms of organised violence. Projects contributing to this topic explore how individuals and groups secure themselves, how violence is used at different levels of social organisation and the possible implications of transforming the conduct of war.



# LIQUID WARFARE

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROLIFERATION OF MODERN MILITARY TECHNOLOGY ON THE WARFARE OF AUTOCRATIC STATES AND NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS



- Presenting a paper on 'Autocracies and Precision Strike Warfare' at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA) in Montréal, Canada, March 2023
- Visiting the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy in the United Arab Emirates in May and June 2023 to talk with experts about the military strategy of the Gulf States

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PARTNER

Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO)

### FUNDER

German Research Foundation (DFG)

### COUNTRIES

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

### DURATION

10/2020–05/2025

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The development and proliferation of military technology are significantly changing the way wars are fought—with far-reaching consequences.

Yet, we do not know enough about how the rapid proliferation of precision-strike technologies, such as cruise missiles, armed drones or precision-guided munitions, affects the warfare of autocratic states and non-state armed groups. With this project, we aim to change this.

We focus on the socio-spatial dimension of warfare. Drawing on Zygmunt Bauman's ideas about the reduced role of territory in 'liquid modernity', the project has developed a typology of solid (territory-focused) and liquid (target-focused) warfare. Based on this typology, we analyse the warfare practices of autocratic states and non-state armed groups.

In the first phase (October 2020–September 2023), our case studies were the Gulf States, the Houthi

in Yemen and the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. In the second phase (December 2023–March 2025), the focus will shift to Russia, China and Turkey.

The results of the research will be presented mainly in the form of articles in peer-reviewed academic journals.

## PUBLICATION



Liquid or Solid Warfare? Autocratic States, Non-state Armed Groups and the Socio-spatial Dimension of Warfare in Yemen.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Max Mutschler (project leader), Marius Bales

# SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

IMPLEMENTING SSR FOR CRISIS PREVENTION, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACEBUILDING



Over the past year, bicc has participated in the German government's project "Research and Knowledge Transfer Office on Security Sector Reform—SSR Hub". bicc staff have provided technical expertise on disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) as well as country-specific expertise on DDR to civil servants and diplomats tasked with implementing Germany's inter-ministerial strategy on SSR.

A 'hub' is an interface between academia and policy practice. It is a forum for peace and conflict researchers to provide conceptual and methodological input to civil servants and career diplomats. It is also a forum to promote inter-ministerial exchange and knowledge transfer.

The SSR Hub is linked to other research hubs embedded in the German Federal Foreign Office, namely the Rule of Law Promotion (RSF) Hub and the Mediation Hub.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Claudia Breitung (project leader), Markus Bayer, Milena Berks

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Facilitating inter-ministerial peer groups on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and the Sahel region
- Supporting the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) in the planning and implementation of a DDR training module for a SSR training course, which took place from 29 August to 2 September 2022

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### PARTNERS

Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) at the University of Hamburg, Freie Universität Berlin, Center for Peace Mediation at the European University Viadrina, Berghof Foundation

### FUNDERS

German Federal Foreign Office (AA) via the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) at the University of Hamburg

### COUNTRY

Germany

### DURATION

04/2022–03/2024

bicc  
bonus  
track



new  
podcast



# GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

bicc

## bicc podcast LAUNCH

Armament and militarisation, forced displacement and migration, extremism and radicalisation—in the new bicc podcast, hosts Fiona Wilshusen and Marius Bales get to the bottom of complex issues in foreign and security policy and Peace and Conflict Studies. They seek an exchange with experts from research, politics and practice outside the academic ivory tower. The first episode of 'Give Peace a Chance: Peace and Conflict Studies in brief' focuses on the current political and economic situation in Afghanistan.

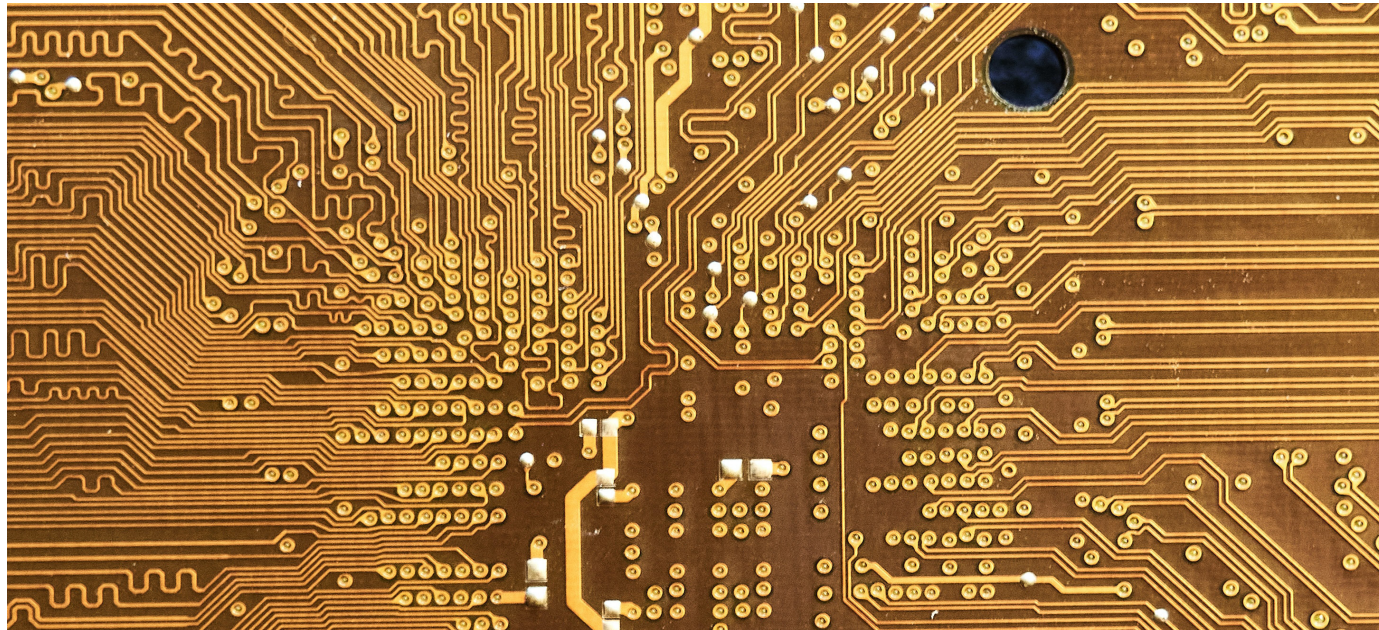
In each podcast episode, the hosts discuss a key topic with a guest and an expert from bicc. Fiona Wilshusen and Marius Bales will bring forgotten conflicts back on the agenda and engage in lively discussions on a wide range of topics. In addition, running features provide listeners with the latest news at their fingertips: The 'Conflict Compact' provides the necessary information on global and regional conflicts. In the 'Peace News of the Month', the hosts show that despite all the crises and conflicts in the world, there are also positive and encouraging developments.



- #1 The Afghanistan Dilemma with Shikiba Baboria & Conrad Schetter
- #2 (Humanitarian) Aid for Dictators with Esther Meininghaus & Michael Kühn

# US-CHINA DETERRENCE

NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR REMOTE WARFARE AND  
THE SHIFTING BALANCE OF DETERRENCE



- Interviews with former US Deputy Secretary of Defense, Robert O. Work
- Successfully applying for a research fellowship at the renowned Nanyang Technological University Singapore, where Ryan Swan discussed his research with international colleagues in early 2024
- Submitting two articles on the impact of remote warfare technology on Chinese military strategy and US-China deterrence to international academic journals

## HIGHLIGHTS

**FUNDER**  
Gerda Henkel Foundation

**COUNTRIES**  
China, United States

**DURATION**  
06/2022–05/2024

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Leading military nations are engaged in an accelerating arms race in militarising emerging technologies. This development has significant implications for the global security environment and risks increasing the likelihood of inadvertent nuclear war.

The rationale for developing new military technologies is deterrence. But how does the advancement of these capabilities affect deterrence? Does it strengthen it, or perhaps even weaken it? In his doctoral research, Ryan Swan seeks to answer this central question.

The research design for testing the impact of emerging military technologies has a theoretical and an empirical component. It involves deriving insights and forming hypotheses from game theoretic modelling of abstract scenarios.

These theoretical conjectures are then tested empirically in the context of the Sino-American deterrence relationship. The empirical component uses a variety of data, including observational data, a range of scholarly and policy literature, experimental wargame simulations and interviews.

### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Max Mutschler (project leader), Ryan Swan



# ARMED GROUPS IN THE SAHEL

REGIONAL APPROACHES TO DEALING WITH ARMED GROUPS



- 90 days of fieldwork in Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad with over 300 qualitative interviews
- Three Memoranda of Understanding concluded with the Neem Foundation (Nigeria), University of Maroua (Cameroon), Le Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie et Sciences Humaines (CRASH)
- 4552 survey entries resulting from large-scale quantitative surveys in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PARTNERS

UN Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peace Operations (DDR Section), African Union Political Affairs and Peace and Security Department (AU-PAPS), DDR/SSR Division, Research Centre on Anthropology and Social Sciences (CRASH), Chad; University of Maroua, Cameroon; Neem Foundation, Nigeria

**FUNDERS** German Federal Foreign Office (AA)

**COUNTRIES** Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria

**DURATION** 11/2022–11/2024

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

All too often, programmes to assist in the reintegration of ex-combatants take on a national perspective, even when armed actors operate in cross-border spaces. This project conducts research on regional conflict systems as they emerge, for instance, in the Lake Chad Basin to bring the regional dimensions to the attention of practitioners and policymakers.

Our field research is guided by a mixed-methods approach that includes interviews, focus group discussions and quantitative surveys at the community level. We work with local researchers in Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon who are closely involved in the research design and implementation.

To deepen the collaboration and exchange between the project partners (African Union, United Nations, bicc) and the Sahelian research partners, we plan for a mid-term residency of Sahelian researchers at bicc in Germany and short-term residencies at the United Nations in New York and the African Union in Addis Ababa. These residencies aim to facilitate exchange between project partners and local researchers, provide insights into different institutional settings and perspectives and offer networking opportunities with other researchers at bicc and beyond in Germany.

From our research, we aim to derive policy recommendations that can be used by the United Nations, the African Union and other regional, national and local actors to improve regional cooperation and programming and support sustainable peace processes. The project's research findings will be disseminated through various formats and transfer activities in 2024.

### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Claudia Breitung (project leader), Milena Berks, Boubacar Haidara, Oyewole Oginni, Amelie Philippsburg

# ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

EVALUATING GERMANY'S CIVILIAN ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN 2013-2021



bicc takes part in the evaluation of the German Ministry of Interior's engagement in Afghanistan in the framework of the inter-ministerial evaluation of Germany's civilian engagement in Afghanistan from 2013 to 2021.

Between 2002 and 2021, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) deployed German federal and state police officers to Afghanistan as part of the bilateral police project in Afghanistan (GPPT), aiming to establish a civilian Afghan police force.

The purpose of the evaluation is to take lessons learned and develop recommendations for future joint foreign and development policy action. The evaluation focuses on the police commitment of Germany before 2013 and the commitment of the BMI in Afghanistan between 2013 and 2021.

For a differentiated view of the object of evaluation, three levels of analysis are examined:

- the political-strategic decision-making level,
- the strategic level at the level of ministerial responsibility and
- the implementation level.

## PARTNERS

German Police University (DHPol), German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), GFA Consulting Group

## FUNDERS

German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI)

## COUNTRY

Afghanistan

## DURATION

05/2022-11/2023

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Questions at the political-strategic level are primarily dealt with in the joint departmental evaluation report. The most important data sources are interviews with project participants, beneficiaries and experts as well as extensive project documents. Secondary literature and secondary data will also be consulted.

## COLLEAGUE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



Katja Mielke (project leader)

# AFGHAN RULE OF LAW

## CURRENT CHANGES IN AFGHANISTAN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

bicc analysed 240 structured semi-structured interviews from 20 provinces to assess ongoing changes in various sectors of local governance in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover in 2021. The study found that the new authorities imitate the centralised system of governance of the Republic and undertake efforts to ensure the provision of basic services, however with clear sectoral differences regarding access to personal documents, healthcare, education and justice.

## HIGHLIGHT

- Non-paper: Current changes in Afghanistan's local governance structures

## FUNDER

GIZ AFG Rule of Law Project

## COUNTRY

Afghanistan

## DURATION

10/2022-12/2023

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Katja Mielke (project leader), Frangis Dadfar Spanta

ABOUT THE PROJECT

# DE FACTO REGIMES

A COMPARISON OF POST-SOVIET CASES



This project examined the sources of survival of de facto regimes. De facto regimes are not frozen conflicts. Therefore, wanting to stabilise the status quo is an illusion.

In 2022, we conducted field research in Armenia, Moldova and northern Iraq, along the so-called contact line and interviewed refugees who had fled Russian-controlled areas or the war zone. We used our networks to document, at least in part, Russia's occupation policy in the newly conquered territories to examine how Russia governs annexed territories.

The exceptional insights we gained from our interviews in Russian-controlled areas enabled us to make valuable contributions to many media outlets in Germany and abroad. The project made a significant contribution to a study commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office on its policy towards de facto regimes, which includes a review of the achievements and shortcomings of German and the European Union's peacebuilding efforts to date and policy recommendations for the coming years.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Andreas Heinemann-Grüder (project leader), Osman Bahadır Dincer

- 50 days of field work in Armenia, Iraq, Moldova and Ukraine
- 100 qualitative interviews
- Study on Germany's contribution to civilian conflict management and peacebuilding in eastern Europe

HIGHLIGHTS

## PARTNER

Centre for Independent Sociological Research in St. Petersburg, Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation in Kyiv

## FUNDER

Volkswagen Foundation

## COUNTRIES

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, Moldova, Ukraine, Syria

## DURATION

01/2020–06/2023

ABOUT THE PROJECT

**bicc's** MISSION IS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH, ADVISE ON POLICY AND STRENGTHEN CAPACITIES FOR RESPONDING TO AND PREVENTING FUTURE OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE IN (POST-)CONFLICT REGIONS.

**bicc**

# MILITARISATION & ARMS CONTROL

bicc projects in this topic focus on the effects of militarisation and weapons proliferation. bicc's work aims to reduce their negative impact by strengthening arms control measures at various levels of society.



# SALW CONTROL AFRICA

FROM ARMOURY LOCKS TO AN AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON SALW CONTROL



Our project takes on the current challenges in small arms and light weapons (SALW) control in Africa from the practical to the strategic level. We support our partners in implementing the provisions set out in relevant SALW control regimes, thereby strengthening these regimes, countering the risk of diversion and unintended explosions and increasing community security.

Our embedded advisors in the African Union and ECOWAS and technical staff in Bonn provide advice and capacity-building to national, regional and international organisations. Our methods include facilitating dialogue, supporting regional training of trainers in physical security and stockpile management (PSSM), harmonising regulatory frameworks and introducing new components as needed. We also conduct mixed-methods research to analyse the impact of environmental changes on conflict and the use of SALW.

During the reporting period, we supported the African Union in developing an African Common Position on Small Arms Control in preparation for the Fourth Review Conference (RevCon4) of the United Nations Programme of Action on SALW in 2024. We continued to support PSSM through regional training courses for technical experts in the RECSA and ECOWAS regions. These courses create regional pools of trainers who can act as multipliers and train technical staff at local, national and regional levels.

With MSAG Austria, we developed a new training module on cross-cutting issues in the RECSA

region. We also developed and implemented a new training course on identifying and tracing weapons and continued to produce and disseminate updated SALW guides and infographics during our training activities and other events. A flagship of our project is an annual course in Germany, jointly implemented

with the *Bundeswehr* Verification Centre which aims to enhance the awareness of executive level representatives of African national and regional organisations on the importance of weapons and ammunition management in a wider SALW and ammunition control context.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: **Joseph Farha** (project leader), Nikhil Acharya, Christine Beeck, Saskia Boniello, Lena Guesnet, Louai Haddad, David Häfner, Elvan Isikozlu, Julia Jagalski, Hannah Jülich, Matthias Krötz, Rebecca Navarro, Pinar Rey, Lamis Saleh, Conrad Schetter, Marc von Boemcken, Karl Wagner, Lars Wirkus

- Successful handover of the Regional Training-of-Trainers PSSM course and its pool of certified PSSM instructors to ECOWAS
- Supporting the African Union in developing, adopting and promoting an African Common Position on small arms control for the 2024 UN PoA Review Conference
- Sensitising parliamentarians on new national firearms legislation and Arms Trade Treaty outreach in Ghana
- Developing a marking, record-keeping, tracing and destruction baseline assessment for the Horn of Africa, with recommendations to the German Federal Foreign Office

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PARTNERS

African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), Bundeswehr Verification Centre (BwVC/ZVBw), Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG), Ghana National Commission on Small Arms (GNACSA)

### FUNDERS

German Federal Foreign Office (AA)

### COUNTRIES

Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Togo

### DURATION

04/2021–03/2025

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

# EXPERT GROUP ON ARMS EXPORTS

ADVOCATING FOR A RESTRICTIVE GERMAN ARMS EXPORTS POLICY



bicc has been involved in the expert group on arms exports of the Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE) for many years. Since 2012, a bicc researcher has (co-)chaired the expert group.

As the joint voice of the two main churches in Germany, the GKKE aims to give political weight to the idea that the world is one. It engages in dialogue with parliament, government and social interest groups in Germany on issues of North–South cooperation and development policy. Based on the expertise of the Arms Expert Group, the GKKE actively advocates for a restrictive German arms export policy. In its annual *Arms Exports Report*, the GKKE critically comments on German export policy and makes suggestions for improving the export control system. With its expertise in the field of arms exports, bicc provides significant input to this report.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Max Mutschler (project leader), Markus Bayer

## PUBLICATION



*Arms Exports Report 2022 of the GKKE. (2022).*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Presenting the GKKE's Arms Exports Report 2022 at the Federal Press Conference in Berlin in December 2022.
- Participating in expert hearings of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) on the proposed German Arms Export Control Act.
- Participating in the GKKE Expert Group's annual parliamentary expert discussion in Berlin with members of the German Bundestag.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

- PARTNER**  
Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE)
- FUNDER**  
Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE)
- COUNTRIES**  
not applicable
- DURATION**  
ongoing since 2012

bicc  
bonus  
track



blog  
article

EXCERPT FROM THE <sup>49</sup>SECURITY BLOG ARTICLE

# FOR A COMPREHENSIVE, GLOBAL AND ACTIVE DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL POLICY

**ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF WAR, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT ARE ESSENTIAL. THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY MUST SPECIFY HOW GERMANY CAN COUNTER THE THREAT OF ARMS RACES.**

A forward-looking and globally oriented German arms control policy has enormous security policy potential. This is because Germany's active arms control policy can help to reduce the dangers of global rearmament and regional arms and escalation dynamics. Arms control policy instruments must support any agreement on ending the war against Ukraine. Agreements on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction define rules that can prevent the military misuse of dual-use technologies. Disarmament and arms control are already reducing human suffering in other regions of the world. Disarmament can help to overcome the prevailing deterrence paradigm, which is becoming increasingly unpredictable in the war against Ukraine. A committed arms control policy fits in with the German government's feminist foreign policy if it is participatory and restrictive and reduces the negative consequences of armament and war, especially for women and marginalised groups.

## KEY POINTS

- 1 A comprehensive, forward-looking, restrictive and participatory arms control policy in Germany can help to mitigate the dangers of global rearmament and regional arms and escalation dynamics.
- 2 Germany must prevent the erosion of important arms control treaties, such as the New START Treaty and the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions, and work towards tightening up existing arms control norms.
- 3 In the area of cyberspace and autonomous weapons systems, the Federal Government must make it clear that it would be prepared to refrain from military action.
- 4 The National Security Strategy should focus on the gender-specific consequences of armaments policy programmes and weapons systems.

READ ON



authors: Meier, O., Brzoska, M.,  
Ferl, A., Hach, S., Bayer, M.,  
Mutschler, M., Prem, B., Reinhold,  
T., Schmid, S., Schwarz, M.

# ARMS EXPORTS

## SECURITY, ARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN RECIPIENT COUNTRIES OF GERMAN ARMS EXPORTS



- Ongoing use by the BMZ of project outputs for data, information and the assessment of the consequences of German or other arms exports to recipient countries.

### PUBLICATIONS



Global  
Militarisation  
Index 2022



Security-  
Armament-  
Development  
Nexus Paper 2022

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### FUNDER

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

#### COUNTRIES

not applicable

#### DURATION

01/2021–12/2024

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Germany is one of the world's largest arms exporters. While weapons can enhance security, they can also cause insecurity and fuel violent conflicts. For recipient countries, arms imports always represent an investment that cannot be made in other areas, such as education or health.

Arms and military equipment are ambivalent products: They can contribute to greater security and at the same time are a source of insecurity or an instrument of repression. Similarly, military spending always means less investment in education and health. Due to this ambivalence, German arms exports are bound by the rules of the EU Common Position. The project therefore provides the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with information on the potential impact of arms exports in the recipient countries and thereby attempts to minimize their negative effects.

The project team collects original data from field research or secondary sources. We analyse the data using qualitative and quantitative approaches before drawing conclusions. We are committed to applied research and seek to present evidence-based conclusions and policy recommendations to political decision-makers and the public. A key challenge is

to reduce the complexity for the 'end user' while still doing justice to the complexity of the issue.

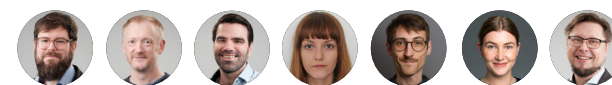
Our research is disseminated to the academic, policy and practitioner communities through:

- the *Global Militarisation Index* (GMI) website, including the *SAD-Nexus Paper* series and the Database on German Arms Exports and specific *Country Reports*;
- contributions to the German annual *Peace Report*, the annual publication on the GMI and by participating in public debates.

### WEBSITE



### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Markus Bayer (project leader), Rolf Alberth, Rodrigo Bolaños Suárez, Stella Hauk, Paul Rohleder, Fiona Wilshusen, Lars Wirkus



# MILITARIZATION M<sub>3</sub>

MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASUREMENT  
OF MILITARIZATION



Militarisation seems to be the defining *Zeitgeist* of the new 'post-Cold War era'. Despite a rich tradition of research, the volume of cross-national empirical research on militarisation—and thus our knowledge of the causes and consequences of the phenomenon—remains thin.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Markus Bayer (project leader),  
Max Rother

Although there is a broad consensus that militarisation is a multi-dimensional process that encompasses not only the size and equipment of armies but also their political and social influence, most empirical studies are based on a one-dimensional definition. Comparative studies are generally scarce. We therefore still know little about how these different dimensions are mutually dependent.

This project aims to address this gap by:

- Developing a multi-dimensional concept of militarisation, covering the material as well as the political and social dimensions; and
- Compiling a first Global Dataset on Multi-dimensional Measures of Militarization (M<sub>3</sub>), providing data on these three dimensions and covering the post-Cold War period (1990–2020) and at least 150 countries enabling scholars to study militarisation in its full complexity.

An academic article, forthcoming in *Armed Forces and Society*, will introduce the dataset to the scientific community and present first results.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 140,000 observations on the three dimensions of material, political and societal militarisation from 1990–2020 included in the new dataset.
- Original data collection on policing tasks taken over by the military in over 100 countries during the past 30 years.
- Launch of the Global Dataset on Multidimensional Measures of Militarization (M<sub>3</sub>) including a codebook with information on each variable in the dataset.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### PARTNERS

Aurel Croissant, University of Heidelberg, Roya Izadi, University of Rhode Island

### FUNDER

German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF)

### COUNTRIES

not applicable

### DURATION

04/2022–08/2023

bicc WORKS  
IN PARTNER-  
SHIPS BASED  
ON TRUST,  
DIVERSITY  
AND RESPECT.  
  
WORLDWIDE.

bicc

# MIGRATION & FORCED DISPLACEMENT

bicc's projects on migration and forced displacement focus on the mobility, livelihood strategies, integration and reintegration prospects of forcibly displaced individuals, along with the causes and consequences of protracted displacement. They provide policy advice, engage in dialogue with key stakeholders and contribute to public debates on the topic.



# GAPS

DECENTRING THE STUDY OF MIGRANT RETURNS AND RETURN POLICIES IN EUROPE AND BEYOND



- Nine blog posts on migration and return in different countries (Poland, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Tunisia)
- Exchange with German stakeholders on return policy (government and legal experts) to organise joint events
- Three panel presentations at the 2023 IMISCOE conference

## PUBLICATION



GAPs Blog

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PARTNERS

Seventeen consortium members including Uppsala University (co-coordinator) and bicc (co-coordinator)

### FUNDER

European Commission, HORIZON Research and Innovation Actions

### COUNTRIES

Afghanistan, Georgia, Germany, Iraq, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey

### DURATION

03/2023–02/2026

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

GAPs aims to examine the disconnects and discrepancies between expectations of return policies and their actual outcomes by decentering the dominant, one-sided understanding of 'return policy-making'. The project examines the shortcomings of the European Union return governance, analyses enablers of and barriers to international cooperation and explores the perspectives of migrants themselves to understand their knowledge, aspirations and experiences with return policies.

The GAPs project focusses on return gaps in three return systems between EU countries and countries of transit or origin, spanning the wider Middle East (including Afghanistan), Africa (northern and western), and eastern Europe. The project treats 'gaps' as a heuristic that allows us to zoom in on three dimensions:

- governance
- international cooperation
- migrants' agency.

The project combines a decentering approach with three innovative concepts to analyse governance fissures, understand how relations among EU member states and third countries hinder cooperation on returns, and use a socio-spatial and temporal lens to understand migrant agency. The project involves multi-disciplinary, qualitative, and quantitative comparative research in 11 countries, with wide-ranging impacts such as the creation of

an interactive data repository on returns, a return cooperation index, policy briefs and stakeholder expert panels.

GAPs also aims to examine the agency of migrants and the autonomy of migration processes that influence and are influenced by governance and cooperation. It will also seek to co-create alternative pathways and models for existing return policies, practices and cooperation that would contribute to the interplay between policy and science.

## WEBSITE



## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek (project leader), Katja Mielke, Lamis Saleh, Monique Michelle Treutler, Daphne Wolf

# FORCED MIGRATION & REFUGEE STUDIES

NETWORKING AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER (FFVT)



Research on forced migration and refugees is highly relevant in Germany. As its importance has grown, so has the demand for expertise from civil society, the media and within politics. Gathering this expertise means building strong networks of experts in Germany and across the globe.

This is what FFVT wants to achieve: networking and knowledge transfer. We do not conduct our own research but support structures that promote research on forced migration and refugees. We coordinate a range of formats and activities to reach out to the international community and to bridge gaps between disciplines. We support equal partnerships with people who have been forcibly displaced and with researchers from the Global South.

The FFVT website is an important information and communication tool. The website includes an information hub on Ukraine and an interactive database of almost 700 research projects in Germany, among other things. A German-language report on the state of forced migration, which is published annually, is a key output of the project.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Maarit Thiem (project leader), Rolf Alberth, Benjamin Etzold, Ann-Christin Komes, Merle Müller, Julia Reichert, Conrad Schetter, Madita Vennemann, Lars Wirkus

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Three international fellows at bicc from the FFVT Fellowship Programme
- Six visits to representatives of the German parliament, German political parties and UNHCR

## PUBLICATION



Report  
Globale Flucht

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### PARTNERS

Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN), German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS)

### FUNDER

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

### COUNTRY

Germany

### DURATION

01/2020–12/2024

## WEBSITE



online  
magazine

bicc  
bonus  
track



EXCERPT FROM  
*INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND SOCIETY ONLINE MAGAZINE*

# WHEN RETURNING HOME FEELS LIKE HELL

bicc

## MIGRANTS RETURNING TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OFTEN FACE PRECARIOUS SITUATIONS. YET, POLICYMAKERS CLING TO INEFFECTIVE BUT SUPPOSEDLY QUICK SOLUTIONS

Every year, countless people return of their own accord to their country of origin after achieving their migration goals or for personal reasons. Many have supported relatives at home and have laid the basis for a new start after their return. Others return home because they feel their goals are unachievable or family reunification hasn't worked out. Even after many years, state return policy is primarily oriented towards people who have no right to remain in their target country. Increasing the number of those returning home—especially rejected asylum seekers and illegal immigrants—is a priority of German and EU migration policy. Much more often, however, these people migrated with no intention of returning, but couldn't come close to their migration goals because integration proved impossible.

### OBSTACLES TO REINTEGRATION

Returning under such circumstances exposes people to the same structural pressures which made them emigrate in the first place. Among these aggravating factors they may have sold their homes or accumulated debt, and in some regions, returnees suffer social stigmatisation. According to bicc's cross-regional comparative study, lacking a secure livelihood is the biggest barrier to reintegration. Frequent hindrances here include a weak or unevenly distributed production and processing sector, low wages, patchy labour law enforcement and too much informal and temporary employment. Other problems include unsatisfactory or no social insurance, patronage systems that hinder workforce entry even to highly qualified workers and training systems not tailored to labour market needs (...).

### READ ON



Authors: Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek, Katja Mielke, Clara Schmitz-Pranghe, Ruth Vollmer

# TRAJECTORIES OF REINTEGRATION

THE IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT, MIGRATION AND RETURN ON SOCIAL CHANGE



- Over six months of field work in eight countries
- Four bicc working papers, one synthesis report and two peer-reviewed journal articles in 2022
- Four workshops in Dakar, Dohuk, Pristina and Berlin along with exchanges with IOM Berlin, IOM Geneva, GIZ, IDOS and DEVAL

## HIGHLIGHTS

### FUNDER

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

### COUNTRIES

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Ghana, Iraq, Kosovo, Senegal, Serbia, Turkey

### DURATION

02/2019–02/2023

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

This year marked the end of bicc's four-year project, which involved more than 14 months of field research on the reintegration trajectories of returnees in the Middle East, the Western Balkans and West Africa.

Our study looked at individual factors (e.g., education, social status, age, gender, resources, networks) and framework conditions (e.g., conflict phase, reconstruction phase, outlook) that influence the reintegration experience. Among other things, we found that the reintegration process of returnees is linked to their access to livelihoods and that this access often requires mobility and trans-local connections.

Returnees often have to remigrate because the overall conditions for reintegration are not conducive and adequate to their needs and aspirations.

This finding clashes with the type of assistance provided to returnees through formal return and reintegration assistance programmes. Bringing these findings to the attention of donors and policymakers was, therefore, a key goal of our pro-

ject's dissemination and transfer activities. The results of our research are summarised in four bicc *Working Papers*, a *Synthesis Note*, a *Synthesis Report*, four bicc *Policy Briefs* and eight journal articles and book chapters.

### HOMEPAGE



### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek (project leader), Pia Sophie Meier, Katja Mielke, Max Rother, Markus Rudolf, Clara Schmitz-Pranghe, Ruth Vollmer

# RETURN AND BELONGING (RE-MIG)

NOTIONS OF RETURN AFTER CONFLICT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT



Peacebuilding and political actors working on return policies rarely take into account the experiences of people going through a return process. The Return and Belonging project (RE-MIG) explores these experiences and argues for their inclusion in policy-making.

RE-MIG empirically studies the role and meaning that displaced people and returnees attach to the notions of return, how they relate to people at 'home' and at the place of living, and how their aspirations and hopes for the future shape their lives. We also explore the role of identity and the social boundaries that are drawn and re-drawn during violent conflict, political transitions and (re)migration. By disseminating our findings to political decision-makers and practitioners, we hope to contribute to more informed and inclusive policy-making on displaced people and their (potential) return.

Using a qualitative and multi-sited research design, our study is based on field research in eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Western Balkans. Outputs include *bicc policy papers*, academic publications, blog posts, workshops and policy events.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Benjamin Etzold (project leader), Osman Bahadır Dinçer, Selina Engelberth, Katja Mielke, Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek, Clara Schmitz-Pranghe, Ruth Vollmer

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Pilot field studies in Serbia and Moldova to assess the current situation of displaced groups
- Exchange with German and international organisations on migration, displacement and displaced people's practices and perspectives on return and reintegration (e.g., BMZ, GIZ, IOM, OECD)
- Panel on reintegration governance at the IMISCOE Annual Conference

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### FUNDER

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

### COUNTRIES

Albania, Iraq, Kosovo, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Syria, Turkey

### DURATION

02/2023–06/2025

## HOMEPAGE



**bicc** BUILDS NETWORKS TO INTERLINK RESEARCH, PRACTICE AND POLICY ON PEACE AND CONFLICT.

WORLDWIDE.

# VIOLENT ENVIRONMENTS & INFRASTRUCTURES

For its research on violent environments and infrastructures, bicc explores how differing worldviews on access to resources, climate-driven scarcity and development projects contribute to social conflicts, aiming to understand and address the link between violent conflict and social inequalities through the lens of sustainability.





# FOOD SECURITY AND CONFLICT

POTENTIALS FOR HUMANITARIAN AID AND PEACEBUILDING IN KENYA



- 350 research participants in 19 study sites in Marsabit county

## PUBLICATIONS



Peace came from the Herders



Study Report: Boundary-Making in a Contested Space

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PARTNERS

Caritas Germany, Caritas Marsabit, Kenya, PACIDA, Kenya

### FUNDER

Caritas Germany

### COUNTRY

Kenya

### DURATION

09/2022–05/2023

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

More than two years of drought in the Horn of Africa has led to the death of over 2.5 million livestock and an acute food crisis affecting 4.4 million people in Kenya. In rural areas, uncertainty and insecurity are particularly high. This is why Caritas Germany asked bicc to conduct a pilot study on food insecurity and violent conflict in Marsabit county, Kenya.

The goal of our study was twofold: To understand the diverse needs of local communities and to gauge the potential for humanitarian and peacebuilding support to meet these needs and positively transform local conflicts. In November 2022, we carried out field research in the Marsabit sub-counties of Saku, North Horr and Laisamis. We combined this with desk research of literature and data on conflict events in the area for a mixed-methods approach.

Our findings are summarised in a Report published in May 2023 on the interrelations between food insecurity and violent conflict in Marsabit, Kenya, with recommendations for policymakers and humanitarian, development and peace practitioners on how to address these links along the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus. The recommendations are the result of a workshop organised by Caritas in Marsabit town with Kenyan and international stake-

holders. The findings of our Report were also discussed at events with Caritas Germany, including with members of the German federal parliament in Berlin. In addition, Caritas Germany published a joint publication summarising the findings and the recommendations for policymakers in August 2023.

In a commentary to the journal *International Migration*, the team reflected on how diverse forms of (im)mobility have been shaped by drought and conflict in Marsabit county, and why this matters in the context of hunger crises.

### COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Marie Müller-Koné (project leader), Benjamin Etzold

# VIOLENT FUTURES?

CONTESTATIONS ALONG THE FRONTIERS



Large-scale infrastructure projects like the LAPSSET corridor in northern Kenya cut through the pastures of pastoralist communities in Kenya and Tanzania. The Standard Gauge Railway, for example, runs through the pastoral lands in Narok in southern Kenya and Morogoro in central Tanzania. What is the impact of these projects on local conflict dynamics?

In this research project, we turn the concept of frontiers into an analytical tool for comparative empirical research on development corridors cutting through pastoral lands in Kenya and Tanzania. We interview representatives of the government, communities, NGOs and private companies to understand the perceived impacts of these infrastructure projects on pastoral communities.

Outputs of our research include three PhD theses, five Master of Arts theses and peer-reviewed journal articles in collaboration with our partners in Kenya and Tanzania. We plan to develop a travelling workshop model between Kenya and Tanzania and communicate our scientific results via local workshops in 2024 and 2025.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Conrad Schetter (project leader), Evelyn Atieno Owino, Marie Born, Marie Müller-Koné, Elizabeth Mumbi Ndunda

## WEBSITES



Violent Futures  
—Collaborative  
Research Center



FRONTIERS—  
mega-  
developments  
and conflict  
dynamics  
in marginal areas of East Africa

HIGHLIGHTS

## PARTNERS

Kennedy Mkutu (USIU), Lucy Massoi and Venance Shilingi (Mzumbe University), University of Bonn, University of Cologne

## FUNDER

Collaborative Research Center  
228 of the German Research  
Foundation (DFG)

## COUNTRIES

Kenya, Tanzania

## DURATION

04/2022–12/2025

ABOUT THE PROJECT

bicc  
bonus  
track



bicc  
annual  
conference

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

# INFRASTRUCTURAL POWER AT GLOBAL FRONTIERS: PROSPECTS OF CONFLICT AND PEACE

bicc

Large infrastructure corridors integrate ports, roads and railways with agricultural lands, energy systems and tourism spaces in remote areas. Infrastructural mega-plans are globally discussed, yet their local imprint is often overlooked, and local populations tend to be rendered invisible. Planners project frontier spaces as 'empty'. Brochures of prospectors and investors do not mention the contestations connected to the implementation of such schemes. Grand projects stir high hopes and deep-seated fears among the residents in the infrastructure corridors.

The conference asked how we are to understand conflicts surrounding infrastructural mega-developments in global frontier spaces—and how these infrastructures may also be used to forge peace.

## SESSION 1: CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS

### Input and presentation

- Charis Enns, The University of Manchester
- Pascal Abb, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt
- Jana Hönke, University of Bayreuth
- Gediminas Lesutis, University of Amsterdam
- Kennedy Mkutu, United States International University, Nairobi

## SESSION 2: OVERCOMING VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURES

### Presentations

- Benjamin Schütze, Arnold Bergsträsser Institute, Freiburg
- Daniel Salau Rogei, Carleton University
- Ian Baird, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Bruno Milanez, Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil
- Bram Büscher, University of Wageningen
- Johannes Dittmann, University of Bonn

## FINAL SESSION: PROSPECTS FOR PEACE? IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS

### Presentations

- Linda Poppe, Director, Survival International Germany
- Ralf Schneider, Head of Program Construction, German Development Cooperation
- Conrad Schetter, Director, bicc

## DOCUMENTATION



# I-WALAMAR

SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES FOR WATER AND LAND MANAGEMENT IN MOROCCO



The global demand for virgin olive oil is high. Yet, irrigated olive plantations contribute to an overuse of water resources in the semi-arid southern Mediterranean region, while its waste products increasingly pollute the water and soil.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Lars Wirkus (project leader),  
Birgit Kemmerling, Rebecca Navarro

The I-WALAMAR project set out to counter these challenges by developing innovative technologies for a local circular economy. bicc's contribution combined empirical qualitative research with remote-sensing methods to analyse the innovation and conflict potentials of introducing new technologies in the Fès-Meknès region in Morocco.

Our analysis showed shifts in land ownership and water resource usage in this region. Interviews with local stakeholders revealed that adopting new technologies may increase social inequalities, while contributing to the process of agricultural intensification in an environment already under stress, bearing the potential for conflict.

- Final conference at  
Université Moulay Ismail in  
Morocco, December 2022

## PUBLICATION



A peer-reviewed  
journal article on  
the Assessment  
of Olive Orchard  
Intensification in  
the Saïss Plain (Morocco)

## PARTNERS

Research Institute for Water  
Management and Climate Future  
at RWTH Aachen University,  
University of Hohenheim,  
University of Applied Science  
Aachen, Inno Agri GmbH, SEBA  
Hydrometrie GmbH & Co.KG,  
Université Moulay Ismail, École  
nationale d'agriculture de  
Meknès, Institut Agronomique  
et Vétérinaire HASSAN II,  
OLEAFOOD, Agence du Bassin  
Hydraulique du Sebou, Régie  
Autonome De Distribution Eau  
Et Electricité Meknès

## FUNDER

Federal Ministry of Education  
and Research (BMBF)

## COUNTRY

Morocco

## DURATION

07/2019–12/2022

# CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

INVESTIGATION OF LOCAL IMPACTS OF LARGE-SCALE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN PAKISTAN



Large-scale infrastructure projects promise regional development and prosperity— But is this truly the case? This is a key question asked in the research consortium 'De:link//Re:link: Local perspectives on transregional processes of entanglements and disentanglements— investigating local impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative' introduced in 2013.

Focusing on Germany and Pakistan, bicc conducts empirical research in Gilgit Baltistan at the starting point of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. Our aim is to understand how the promises of this large-scale infrastructure project resonate with local communities in northern Pakistan and its potentials for conflict, development and change.

Outputs of bicc's project within the consortium include a cumulative PhD with a minimum of three peer-reviewed journal articles, participation in peer-group conferences, podium discussions and podcasts.

## COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT



FLTR: Katja Mielke (project leader), Nadja Ali, Conrad Schetter

## WEBSITE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- 70 days of field work in Pakistan (Islamabad, Gilgit, Nasirabad, Aliabad, Karimabad, Attabad)
- Over 60 in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### PARTNERS

Humbolt University Berlin (Lead), Centre for East European and International Studies (ZoIS), Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)

### FUNDER

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

### COUNTRIES

Germany, Pakistan

### DURATION

04/2021–06/2024

WE DO  
RESEARCH.  
POLICY ADVICE.  
CAPACITY  
DEVELOPMENT.

FOR A MORE  
PEACEFUL  
WORLD.



13  
journal articles

7  
book chapters

2  
books

3  
working papers

72  
publications

18  
other articles

biccc

# PUBLICATIONS

08/2022—09/2023

bicc publishes in international journals, books or edited volumes, as well as in our own publication series. We seek to reach scholars, policymakers, practitioners and the public alike.

# WHEN THE WAR ATTITUDE PERSISTS

Resorting to so-called pro-government militias (PGMs) in the face of severely challenged state forces is a timeless phenomenon in government politics across the globe. However, providing military training and distributing weapons to civilians can represent a security risk—in the short and the long term. Sierra Leone and Liberia share a history of protracted civil wars with the involvement of numerous pro- and anti-government militias. Previous research also demonstrated that networks of former combatants continued to exist in both countries after the end of the civil wars. However, most of these studies were conducted in the early 2000s, the first decade following the civil wars and thus lack a long-term perspective. How do PGMs affect societies politically and socially in the long run. Building on qualitative interviews conducted 20 years after the end of the civil wars, the study indicates that in Sierra Leone and Liberia

- networks of former combatants continue to exist;
- the membership in progovernment militias creates persistent identities;
- networks of former combatants can become an instrument of political violence;

- networks of former combatants affect social development.

From these findings, it can be concluded that former (pro-government) combatants represent a potential instrument for exercising political violence—even decades after the official end of a conflict. Furthermore, the analysis suggests that if the ruling party, as in the case of Sierra Leone, or the current government, as in the case of Liberia, is willing to use violence to enforce its interests, ex-militias seem to be the resource to use. The political will thus has a decisive effect on the question of which form of (political) violence is exercised by ex-combatants.



Wilshusen, F. (2023). *When the 'War Attitude' persists: How Pro-Government Militias affect Society in the Long Run* (Security–Armament–Development Nexus Paper). bicc.



# THE EVOLVING NATURE OF DDR

Over the past decade, armed conflict has continued to evolve, becoming increasingly complex and involving a diverse set of non-state armed actors. The latter range from armed groups with political agendas and grievances, to groups designated as terrorist organisations, criminal networks, gangs and local self-defense groups.

These actors frequently operate at multiple levels. Although mostly starting off as internal conflicts, domestic armed conflicts often take on regional and international dimensions as conflict actors from within the country collaborate with external forces for mutual benefit. This increased internationalisation of domestic armed conflict is hampering the search for peaceful solutions and making these conflicts deadlier, more protracted and more resistant to resolution. This coincides with a geopolitical context that is less conducive to the political settlement of disputes. These developments in the global landscape of

armed conflict are crucial for Disarmament, (DDR) policymakers and practitioners who are tasked to plan, design and implement integrated DDR processes.

This study was jointly developed by bicc and the Department of Peace Operations' (DPO) Disarmament, Disarmament and Demobilization Section in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (ORLSI) and aims to provide policymakers and practitioners with an overview of how DDR approaches and practices have responded to the evolving nature of armed conflict over the past decade (since the Second Generation DDR concept was introduced) and shows how these approaches could be further enhanced.



Breitung, C. & Richards, J. (2022). *The Evolving Nature of DDR: Study on Engaging Armed Groups Across the Peace Continuum*. bicc.



# EASTERN EUROPE BETWEEN THE FALL OF THE WALL AND THE UKRAINE WAR



## THE ROLE OF RETURN PREPAREDNESS



Migrant receiving countries in Europe have set up assistance programmes to facilitate the return and reintegration of rejected asylum-seekers, migrants with no legal status or those wanting to return. The question is: Do assistance programmes actually do so, and how do reintegration trajectories take shape from the perspectives of the returnees themselves? These were key questions in the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)-funded research project 'Trajectories of Reintegration. The Impacts of Displacement, Migration and Return on Social Change' at bicc from 2019 to early 2023.

The report summarises the findings of four case studies conducted in the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina and

Serbia, Albania, Kosovo), West Africa (Ghana, Senegal and the Gambia) and the Middle East (Iraq). The study used a multi-sited and long-term research approach, and the sample consisted of both assisted and unassisted returnees and their social contexts. 'By bringing in the migrants' experiences, we found that the returnees' access to livelihood options, their long-term aspirations and life plans, as well as the political context in the origin country, play a decisive role in their process of reintegration', explains senior researcher and project leader, Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek.

Moreover, findings of the study show that the returnee's willingness and readiness to return—along with the support of social networks—has a greater impact on reinte-

gration than formal assistance. However, assistance is critical for returnees with low return preparedness, especially in the initial phase after return. The study concludes that individualised, holistic and demand-driven approaches are required to achieve effects of reintegration assistance in the longer term, and that the links between development and reintegration must be addressed more systematically. The author recommends that remigration and circular migration be considered a component of reintegration.



Şahin-Mencütek, Z. (2023). *The Role of Return Preparedness, Assistance and Networks in Returnees' Reintegration in Origin Countries*. Synthesis Report. bicc.

Does anyone remember the „common European home"? Gorbachev's dream of a Europe that stretches from Lisbon to Vladivostok? Today, thirty years after the end of the East-West conflict, the rift that separates Russia from its western neighbors is deeper than ever. There is war in Ukraine and state terror in Belarus.

**'The volume shows that Ukraine (...) has not arrived as a subject in the German discourse. The identification, derivation and clear criticism of this shortcoming are a great merit of this book.'**

Nicolas Freund, Süddeutsche Zeitung

Within the EU, fault lines are becoming visible along the old border. Constitutional changes in Poland and Hungary are threatening the recently won rule of law and democracy. There is much to suggest that we are on the threshold of a new era. How did it come to this? A good thirty years after the collapse of the communist systems in Eastern Europe, the authors take a critical look back - in a joint effort, saturated with experience and insight.



Aust, M., Heinemann-Grüder, A., Nußberger, A., Schmid, U. (2022). *Osteuropa zwischen Mauerfall und Ukrainekrieg*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin.





# SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

## GEOPOLITICS

**Liquid or Solid Warfare? Autocratic States, Non-State Armed Groups and the Socio-Spatial Dimension of Warfare in Yemen.**

This article develops a typology of liquid and solid warfare and probes, whether and how the proliferation of precision-strike technology to Saudi Arabia and the Houthis has influenced the socio-spatial dimension of their warfare in the internationalised Yemeni civil war.



Mutschler, M. & Bales, M. (2023). Liquid or Solid Warfare?

Autocratic States, Non-State Armed Groups and the Socio-Spatial Dimension of Warfare in Yemen. *Geopolitics*, 1-29.

## JOURNAL OF GLOBAL SECURITY STUDIES

**When Do States Repatriate Refugees? Evidence from the Middle East.**

Which conditions affect whether a state will choose to repatriate forcibly displaced populations residing within its borders? This paper expands upon the concept of the refugee rentier state to theorize inductively upon the conditions shaping states' policymaking on repatriation.



Şahin-Mencütek, Z. & Tsourapas, G. (2022). When Do States Repatriate

Refugees? Evidence from the Middle East. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaco31>

## ENERGY RESEARCH & SOCIAL SCIENCE

**The political ecology of geothermal development: Green sacrifice zones or energy landscapes of value?**

This article explores the potential of large-scale geothermal projects to benefit local communities, a topic about which little is known. We address this gap in the scholarly literature by focusing on Iceland and Kenya, two countries that have pioneered geothermal power generation infrastructure for many decades.



Greiner, C., Klagge, B. & Owino, E. (2023). The political ecology of geothermal

development: Green sacrifice zones or energy landscapes of value? *Energy Research & Social Science*, 99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2023.103063>

## IRAN AND THE CAUCASUS

**On Peace Activists and Skilled Survivors. Afghan Exiles and Transnational History-Making from Below.**

This article examines multiple entanglements of Afghan exiles' biographies in West Germany with Cold War- and contemporary history. The life stories of six men who have been residing in Germany since the 1970s but were physically and cognitively highly mobile in their engagement for change in Afghanistan highlight the role of human agency in transnational history-making.



Mielke, K. (2023). On Peace Activists and Skilled Survivors. Afghan Exiles and

Transnational History-Making from Below. *Iran and the Caucasus*, 1(27), 105-123.

## ARMED FORCES & SOCIETY

**Prisoner's Dilemma: Hedging Loyalties in (Un)Governed Space of the Lake Chad Basin.**

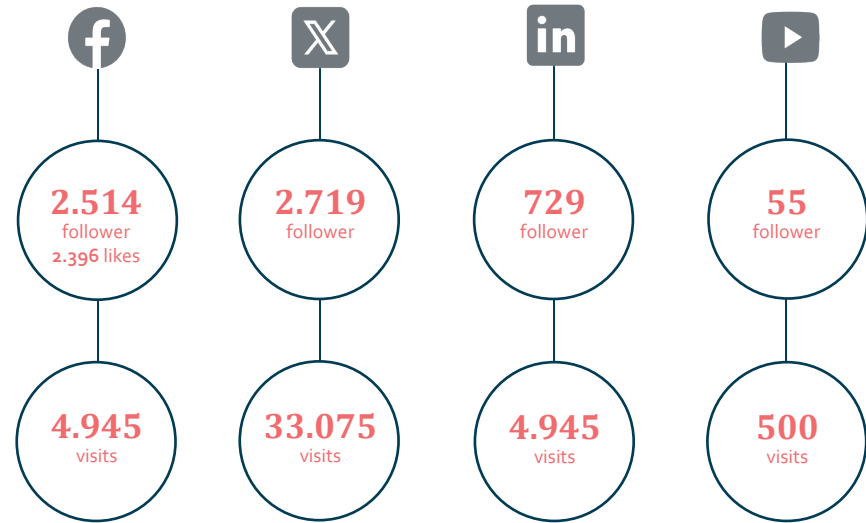
This article examines the dynamics of interactions between civilians, armed groups, and the state in frontline states. Drawing on a 6-year ethnographic study of armed conflicts in the Lake Chad Basin region, the article argues that civilian loyalty becomes multiple and overlapping when the roles of the state and armed groups become indistinguishable in insecure spaces.



Oginni, O. S. (2023). Prisoner's Dilemma: Hedging Loyalties in (Un)Governed

Space of the Lake Chad Basin. *Armed Forces & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X231177896>

# MEDIA WORK & DATA



Our websites: GAPs - Decentering the Study of Migrant Returns and Readmission Policies in Europe and Beyond  
 ● CoRE-NRW - Connecting Research on Extremism in NRW  
 ● Forced Migration & Refugee Studies  
 ● Rüstungs-export.info  
 ● TRAFIG-Transnational Figurations of Displacement  
 ● Information Portal War and Peace bpb  
 ● The Interactive Guide on Small Arms and Light Weapons  
 ● StG-PoA SALW control database  
 ● Global Militarisation Index (GMI)

Website Forced Migration & Refugee Studies

**FFVT** Flucht- und Flüchtlingsforschung Vernetzung und Transfer

691 Forschungsprojekte

Anzahl laufender Forschungsvorhaben

Forschungsnetzwerk

FFVT  
Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Networking and Knowledge Transfer

INTERNATIONALISATION  
FFVT Fellowship programme

UKRAINE  
Ukraine: Forced Migration Information Hub

Details

Diese Seite teilen

Eine Kooperation von

Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC)  
Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN)  
German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)  
Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien (IMIS)

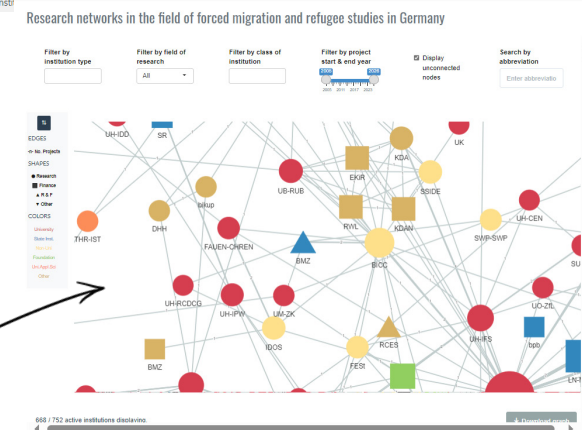


media presence by medium

40

TELEVISION

The research map covers relevant projects in the field of forced migration and refugee research in Germany. Within the FFVT project, this database is continuously updated.



Our app allows you to explore a network of institutions related to Forced Migration and Refugee Studies and their connections. You can filter and visualise the network based on different criteria, search for specific institutions and download the generated graph.

The app consists of three horizontal sections. The top section contains the main controls, the middle section displays the network graph and the sidebar, and the bottom one shows additional information.



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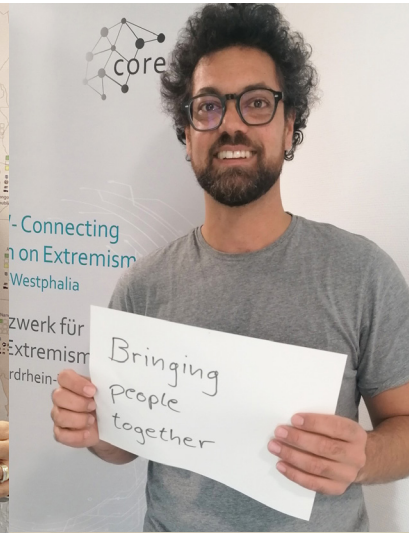
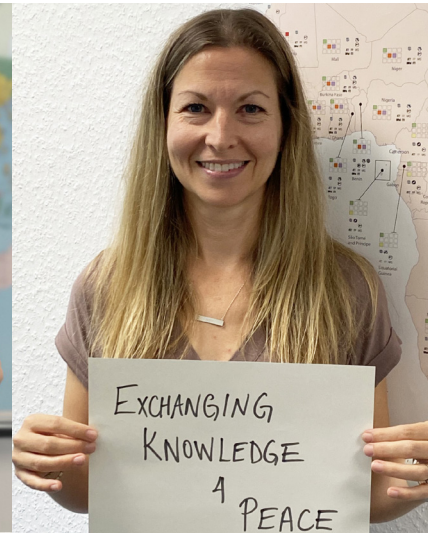
COMMENTS

6

PODCAST

# PEOPLE AT bicc

Our team at bicc deals with a wide range of global topics in Peace and Conflict Studies centring on the conditions, dynamics and consequences of violent conflicts. We strive to find innovative ways to improve the links between research, practice and political decision-making to contribute to a more peaceful world.



13	Administration & Organisation
Staff	
42	Research, Advisory Services & Capacity Development
12	Student & Research Assistants

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bicc's Supervisory Board advises its Trustee and oversees the performance of bicc management. Among other things, the Board is responsible for appointing bicc's director and approving bicc's annual work programmes and financial plans.

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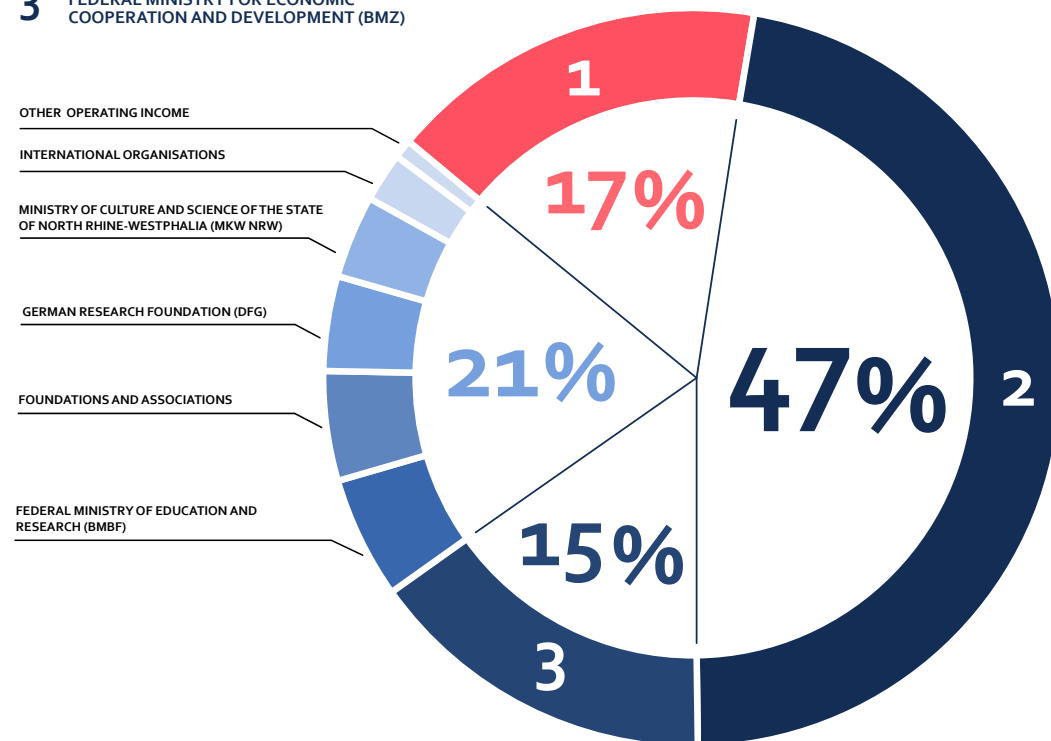
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The International Board advises bicc and its management in all basic academic, political, as well as structural matters. It discusses and makes suggestions concerning the fundamental orientation of bicc's work, the annual work programme and publications as well as its evaluation.

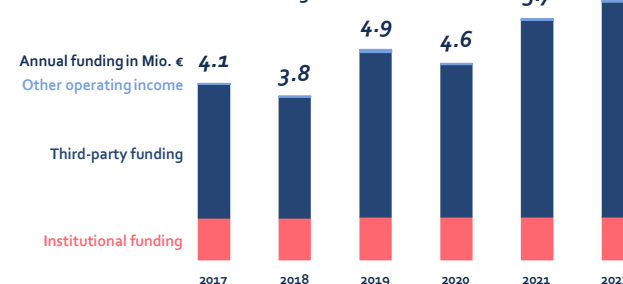
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- 2 GERMAN FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE  
(AA)
- 3 FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (BMZ)



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annual report 2023

# bicc

Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies

bicc - Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies is an independent international research institute dedicated to research and policy advice on the conditions, dynamics and consequences of violent conflicts to contribute to a more peaceful world.

Its multidisciplinary approach covers the topics of

- building peace and social cohesion
- militarisation and arms control
- agents and patterns of security and war
- violent environments and infrastructures
- migration and forced displacement

bicc was founded in 1994 with the support of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia and is a member of the Johannes-Rau-Research Community.

[www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de)

● ● ● for a more peaceful world