



Shaping stabilisation

Foreign and security
policy concept for an
integrated action
for peace



Federal Foreign Office

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Guiding principles



In crisis contexts, the Federal Foreign Office acts internationally integrated, based on partnerships, and takes concrete steps to pave the way for political solutions to conflicts: the basic principles of integrated action for peace.

Crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding are all core components of an integrated, pragmatic and operational peace policy, which operates mostly in contexts with high levels of violence. As such, this peace policy forms an integral part of Germany's foreign and security policy. It reflects Germany's determination to assume more responsibility in preventing and managing crises and conflicts globally.

The conflict landscape has changed in recent years. Russia's attack on Ukraine marks a turning point. It is still too early to ascertain how this will affect Germany's orientation in foreign and security policy and that of the European Union in the medium to long term. One thing is clear, however: a flexible set of tools that can be adapted to each particular challenge is needed now more than ever in order to act decisively in response to crises and conflicts.

The present concept sets out how key components of a proactive peace policy can be developed out of the current foreign and security policy. It thus defines the foreign and security policy contribution made by the Federal Foreign Office to international peacebuilding, as set out in the Guidelines.¹ The special role that women play in conflict

situations requires our attention and calls for specific efforts in this context. The concept is also designed as a contribution to Germany's first National Security Strategy by taking stock of the Federal Foreign Office's experience in civilian stabilisation operations while looking to the future.

The aforementioned measures widen and increase the impact of Germany's diplomatic engagement in the world's most critical regions. And they make a contribution towards fulfilling the Foreign Service's mission to pursue a "lasting, peaceful and just order" and to promote the "interests of the Federal Republic of Germany" abroad. Integrated action for peace aims to unite activities into an integrated civilian and military approach; it incorporates the measures into an international and multilateral framework, combines various sectoral instruments and is placed firmly within the context of diplomatic action.

1 Federal Government of Germany Policy Guidelines on Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace, 2017.

Guiding principles

- **Crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding measures are the instruments to shape the political environment**, aimed at influencing key actors, curbing violence and promoting political and societal negotiation processes. Strengthening legitimate statehood is a key point of reference here.
- **Measures by the Federal Foreign Office are geared towards an integrated approach and effective multilateralism**. No one party can take successful action alone in the crisis contexts of today. Working together can help consolidate alliances and enhance the division of tasks. As part of a political strategy, diplomatic, civilian, military and police measures can be combined to take flexible and targeted action.
- **The sovereignty and individual responsibility of our partners are vital for success, but they also restrict the political options for Germany and the international community to take action**. The political and social processes and institutions in crisis areas often do not correspond to our values. In our supporting role, we cannot simply reject them without examining them more closely. In individual cases it may be necessary to cooperate with them in order to avoid jeopardising local acceptance of our peace efforts. At the same time, we also need to adopt a clear stance regarding our own values.
- **It is often more important “how” we do something than “what” we do in each case: approaches must be dynamic and be able to respond flexibly to the situation on the ground**. The unpredictability and complexity of crisis contexts requires pragmatism, a willingness to take risks and the ability to change course by making flexible use of tools without losing sight of the foreign policy objective as our ‘north star’. Regularly reviewing our own methodology and adapting measures is not indicative of a lack of planning but is indispensable for successful crisis work.

Five megatrends that influence our actions

1. Domestic armed conflicts, usually long-lasting, are the most common form of conflict. They are primarily caused by competition over power and resources between various social and political groups. Violence is used by the conflict parties as a means to impose a new distribution of power. The civilian population usually suffers the consequences of instability and violence. Forced displacement and the blocking of humanitarian access are often used as weapons of warfare. At the same time, sections of the population may also profit from the conflict and 'conflict economies', as well as the shadow economy. Non-governmental and/or private security actors assume quasi-governmental regulatory functions. Particularly if conflicts are taking place more towards the periphery of a country, they might receive little attention from the government. Foreign policy crisis engagement must address these power dynamics and, if possible and appropriate to do so, must seek to address them in a constructive way.

2. Crises and conflicts are becoming both more local and more transnational. Conflict events are becoming more anonymous, more hybrid and more complex and are thus easier to manipulate by (non-)state actors. Armed conflicts now rarely take place between states, but they are more often shaped by external supporters, who in turn pursue their own strategic, political and economic goals. The conflict contexts are transnational too: militias, mercenaries and criminal or terrorist groups operate across borders. The more resources these groups accumulate as beneficiaries of conflicts, the greater the extent to which they impede conflict resolution. The way in which these influences become manifest at local level depends on the specific conditions on the ground. This must be continually analysed and incorporated into the design of countermeasures. Foreign policy crisis engagement must take effective measures against these groups and their sources of funding.

3. Democratic values and institutions and the rule-based global order are under pressure. Competition between systems and values is having an increasingly polarising effect. Autocracies are competing with democratic systems for influence; a standoff is developing between unilateralism and protectionism on the one hand and multilateralism and international cooperation on the other. These global dynamics have an impact on conflicts, either directly through warlike measures or indirectly through disinformation or radical ideologies. Autocracies exploit existing regional conflict situations or disrupt ongoing peace efforts in order to enhance their geostrategic position.

4. The challenges of climate crisis are becoming increasingly relevant to security policy. The impacts of the climate crisis can exacerbate existing conflicts and create new ones. Deteriorating living conditions, rural exodus and growing battles over the distribution of increasingly scarce resources create a breeding ground for instrumentalisation by armed groups or illegitimate elites. For-

foreign policy crisis engagement can make targeted contributions towards preventing, mitigating and resolving violent conflicts that arise due to the impacts of the climate crisis. This can be done, for instance, through specific mediation approaches directed at the constructive resolution of conflicts over resources, for example.

5. Local and geostrategic conflicts are increasingly being played out in cyberspace. This trend is set to increase, in line with the extent that digital transformation is changing societies and economic systems. State and non-state actors operate in an as yet largely unregulated cyberspace and information space, which can potentially have direct repercussions on conflicts in the analogue world. Areas of action such as the development of state cyber capacity (for example to combat terror and organised crime) and initiatives to promote liberties and political participation on the internet or to tackle hate speech will thus become increasingly important for foreign policy project engagement.



Political partnerships as the key to success

Political clout is needed to overcome violent conflicts. Germany can lend its own influence most effectively in collaboration with international partners. Here, too, a European focus is critical. Wherever possible and appropriate, a joint European approach should be fostered alongside a joint transatlantic one. Multilateral initiatives also play an important role here – ranging from the United Nations in New York and Geneva and international peace missions in

crisis countries to locally coordinated approaches. There has been considerable conceptual progress in recent years too. Key international partners such as the US and the UK, the EU and a number of member states (including France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) have refined their approaches to conflict prevention and stabilisation, incorporated academic input, promoted them together with multilateral institutions and then implemented these approaches in specific operational settings.

The foreign policy credo of acting in collaboration with others and the use of financial resources go hand in hand.

Grappling to establish objectives and funding, discussing risks openly and exploring opportunities creates a more concrete and deeper partnership. A key element of foreign policy crisis engagement involves establishing and expand-

ing international partnerships. Joint measures provide points of reference for concerted action, and the visibility this affords to Germany's activities helps to shape the international agenda. The multilateral stabilisation facilities (see box) provide an example of how this works in practice.



Stabilisation facilities for a concerted approach

Stabilisation facilities offer a framework within which, as an international donor, the Federal Foreign Office can enter into a stabilisation partnership with national and regional actors in the partner country. Characterised by mutual responsibility, this partnership allows goals and approaches to be devised together to stabilise conflict regions. Measures are usually designed to facilitate the return of the state or to strengthen the state's positive presence and its key function: providing security and basic services based on a relationship of trust with the population. An important principle is that successes are to be seen as those of the government concerned and not identified as an international support measure.

The facilities essentially operate like multilateral funds within an alliance of like-minded actors: The measures financed through the facilities are designed, prioritised and implemented in an inclusive political process at various levels (national, regional, local). On account of the clear leadership role adopted by the partner government and a cross-sectoral approach, stabilisation facilities promote political ownership. The relevant actors, e.g. government, local civil society, police and the military, are thus brought together in order to realise clearly defined goals by planning and acting together. As the partnership is based on joint action and does not merely produce theoretical papers, it builds the necessary trust and credibility to discuss political topics seriously too. This ideally results in an approach that is better synchronised among actors, and an enhanced civilian-military coordination, which in turn is crucial for the success of stabilisation measures.

In the Lake Chad region, for example, the main civilian and military decision-makers were brought together for the first time through a multilateral stabilisation facility set up by the Federal Foreign Office. This provided the regional actors with a mechanism with which they were able to initiate local peacebuilding processes and improve living conditions in the region. The facility and the financial contribution provided by the Federal Foreign Office are a means to an end here. The decisive factor is the incentive to achieve

political consensus at the local level and to agree on common goals. Missions against terrorist groups can only be successful if the population actually witnesses the return of the civilian state with all its services immediately afterwards. This is the only way to provide a credible alternative to Boko Haram and Daesh. The facilities offer the right platform to do this, partly because they coordinate the international donors themselves more or less in passing. For the German embassies in the four countries bordering Lake Chad (Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Chad), the facility opens up additional opportunities for political dialogue with the host governments and lends greater weight to international consultations on the ground.

The humanitarian–development–peace nexus

In crises, a large number of diverse actors are engaged whose particular goals and priorities have the potential for conflict but also offer opportunities for synergies. As part of the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus, key actors from these three areas seek to coordinate their activities more effectively. The German Government’s policy guidelines from 2017 are also a living expression of this nexus by strengthening national coordination and leveraging important synergies between the different pillars of the nexus. This coordination takes place both at the level of content between the three aforementioned pillars and between the different actors that contribute to peacebuilding. Actors from

the humanitarian aid and development cooperation sectors thus also partially play an active role in achieving the goal of peace. The Federal Foreign Office and its embassies have a particular responsibility for coordinating the German Government’s activities abroad.

Within the framework of this nexus, the Federal Foreign Office’s measures for integrated action for peace are anchored entirely within the peace-building pillar. The legal basis for the Federal Foreign Office’s responsibility in the field of international crisis management and conflict resolution is provided by Section 1 of the Foreign Service Act (Gesetz über den Auswärtigen Dienst, GAD), under which the Foreign Service has a mandate to “pursue a lasting, peaceful and just order in Europe and between the peoples of the world”. For-

foreign policy crisis engagement is a step along the road towards achieving this peace. It is the task of Directorate-General S to design these measures such that they serve this goal.

Foreign policy crisis engagement is especially important and has a particular obligation in linking peacebuilding with the other two policy areas of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Firstly, flexible political measures can be used to prevent new humanitarian emergencies from arising or at least to reduce the extent of these crises. Secondly, during a crisis the foundations for sustainable development can be laid and hence structural causes of conflict addressed, taking a long-term perspective. Moreover, humanitarian and development engagement support the peacebuilding pillar.

However, it must be recognised that there may be conflicting goals. For example, stabilisation measures are inherently political, while humanitarian aid is governed by humanitarian principles and is thus neutral. Often, however, both are needed at the same time. Here, it is vital to assess the situation with the stakeholders in order to initiate innovative solutions adapted to the specific situation on an ongoing basis with a view to managing the particular dilemmas.

Integration of policy areas – nationally and internationally

In complex crisis contexts, the German Government needs to draw on the full spectrum of policy instruments. Military and police engagement, integrated action for peace, development cooperation and humanitarian aid must be coordinated with one another more effectively as policy areas to achieve the overarching peace objective. In order to achieve the desired results and avoid unintended consequences, an honest assessment of the policy trade-offs involved in a given context needs to be made in order to decide on the preferred policy choice and the instruments to deliver it.

The Federal Foreign Office has a mandate to facilitate an integrated approach by the ministries in crisis contexts through political steering – with shared overall responsibility but separate areas of responsibility. By adopting the Operations Manual and the Concept for Joint Analysis and Coordinated Planning, the ministries established a framework that can be continuously filled with life. During moments of crisis, the Federal Foreign Office convenes task forces that are mandated to provide joint assessments and develop shared objec-

tives across ministries. Additionally, the Federal Foreign Office may establish country-specific interministerial task forces. Joint or coordinated budget lines may also be created in order to promote cooperation; examples include the national initiative to enable and enhance, for which the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of Defence are jointly responsible, and the support for police training and equipment provided for projects by the Federal Ministry of the Interior who has the policy lead.

At international level too, operational integration of crisis engagement is a key factor in ensuring that they are effective. The Federal Foreign Office therefore endeavours to combine its activities, where appropriate, with civilian or military approaches by other actors. Regardless of whether Germany is involved in military operations, it can provide support for the activities of a United Nations peace mission, a mission as part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy or the military operations of an international coalition. Joint working formats, such as the Stabilisation Working Group of the international anti-IS coalition, are a key to success in this context.

Objectives of integrated action for peace



Crisis prevention tackles violent conflicts at an early stage; stabilisation creates incentives for non-violent conflict resolution; peacebuilding prevents a relapse into violence – these are the three pillars of integrated action for peace. All three pillars are interlinked.

Integrated action for peace involves viewing the entire complex picture from an international perspective and taking strategic and practical action on that basis. In order to do so, civilian, military and police measures need to be integrated, the measures have to be coherent with the international and multilateral approaches, various sectoral instruments should be combined, and this engagement incorporated into diplomatic efforts. It thus complements Germany's integrated approach. The aim for peace is always at the heart of integrated action for peace along with support for political solutions to (potentially) violent conflicts – with all their difficult negotiation and bargaining channels. It is often impossible to clearly distinguish between crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding, as conflicts do not proceed in a linear series of consecutive phases either. These approaches share a focus on specific interim steps towards achieving positive peace, which is understood as a situation in society that is not only characterised by the absence of organised, physical violence but also facilitates political and social participation under the rule of law where human rights are upheld.

In practical terms, measures implemented as part of integrated action for peace promote the willingness and ability of relevant actors to participate in these political processes. Alternatively, they can weaken the political basis of illegitimate actors and thus decrease their ability to enter into and extend conflicts and to sabotage any settlement, e.g. in the form of a peace agreement. With a clear focus such as this, the available resources can be used responsibly for specific project measures.

Crisis prevention

As a foreign and security policy approach, crisis prevention strengthens political processes that prevent or reduce the use of violence in conflicts. The aim of diplomacy has always been to settle conflicts between parties and to prevent them from escalating into a crisis. Crisis prevention should be regarded as a filter that is imposed on all foreign engagement, if priority is actually given to political means, and prevention should be the primary goal. This is because prevention does not take an ideal, crisis-free stage as its starting point, but is in fact important in any actions taken before, during and after the crisis.

Prevention is based on meticulous early warning mechanisms. The aim of early warning is to identify the risk of violent escalation of conflicts at an early stage. Both conventional analytical approaches and data-based methods are used in this context. PREVIEW, a division set up by the Federal Foreign Office, combines both these elements: crisis forecasting using machine learning models, scenario techniques, actor analyses and other tools. The inter-ministerial Crisis Early Warning working group plays a particular role here. Crisis early warning is also established at international level, e.g. within the EU Early Warning System.

Foreign and security policy crisis engagement can have a particularly effective impact on preventing crises if diplomatic efforts are combined with intelligently chosen project measures. Dedicated communication channels and relations should be established prior to a crisis, and can then be activated to prepare for constructive solutions. The quality of relations between actors – local, national, regional or global – quickly becomes apparent in the event of any escalation of a crisis, because there is often no time left to establish

solid relations. This has to be done beforehand and then actively used if a conflict escalates. Looking at the wider region of an existing crisis with a view to prevention is also important in order to isolate the crisis. Where do we need to strengthen neighbouring regions, enhance the resilience of the population and prevent potential conflicts that might arise as a result of displaced persons settling there? Where do we need to take targeted steps to curb illicit trade in weapons, drugs or humans to ensure that these trading routes do not destabilise other regions too by igniting problems there?

The aim is thus to anticipate crises before they occur, to understand their causes and on that basis to take appropriate action with a view to minimising their impact. In many cases, crisis prevention will not be able to prevent armed conflicts. However, even minimising damage by reducing the level of violence can be considered a success. Even if regional crises seem likely to spread, active foreign policy needs to use integrated action for peace to take precautionary steps in an attempt to support regions in the vicinity of a crisis that are (still) stable.

Displacement and irregular migration in integrated action for peace

Measures implemented to address crises often contribute in the medium to long term to tackling the causes of forced displacement. This is mainly the case if armed conflicts, the collapse of states and repression are key drivers of forced displacement. At the same time, forced displacement and irregular migration can have a destabilising effect on the countries of origin as well as on transit and host countries for various reasons. Social tension between irregular migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees and host communities may trigger further conflicts. Changes in the migration routes can strengthen the position of illegitimate actors if human trafficking is combined with the smuggling of arms or drugs. Interactions between forced displacement and migration on the one hand and stabilisation goals and measures on the other are therefore relevant in many respects. These issues must be addressed in a crisis context using an appropriate overall political approach that includes the local and regional conflict situation. Regional approaches will often be particularly important here, as forced displacement and migration have cross-border repercussions. Moreover, particularly in this cross-cutting area, cooperation with international partners – either in multilateral or European approaches – plays a predominant role in finding joint solutions.

Our embassies have a key role to play.

In their core operations – maintaining partnerships – and through concrete (project) measures, they can cooperate with their host governments and with civil society, diplomatic and regional actors in response to a specific risk of escalation to deliver targeted inter-

ventions, counter drivers of crisis and promote political stability. At the same time, they are important in assessing crisis prevention approaches dynamically on the basis of the current challenges, exchanging analyses with partners and steering measures accordingly.

Stabilisation

Stabilisation as an integrated foreign and security policy approach supports political processes in order to find a way out of violent conflicts, generate trust and prepare a more peaceful future. Stabilisation as part of a foreign and security policy takes targeted steps to provide incentives for strengthening, weakening or otherwise influencing selected political processes or actors in a context shaped by violent conflicts.² Stabilisation aims to support political processes to contain violence, strengthen legitimate governance structures and facilitate initial steps towards reconciliation between conflict parties. This is done in particular by promoting security and by providing resources that open up the way for a peace dividend. A further contribution towards stabilisation might involve improving enabling conditions for legitimate political systems and peaceful conflict resolution following military territorial gains.



Peace dividends

Peace dividends that benefit relevant sections of the population, e.g. in the form of improved basic services, may be to help generate support for negotiations. In the logic of stabilisation, a peace dividend must offer clear incentives particularly for the unpeaceful actors, for example local armed groups. After all, these parties play a central role in the use of violence in a conflict. These target groups must recognise that the renunciation of violence offers more advantages than the use of violence in the conflict.

² The 2017 guidelines form an overarching framework: 'The stabilisation of countries and regions is one of the Federal Government's approaches to handling violent conflicts. With its stabilisation measures, the Federal Government supports political processes of conflict resolution, while providing an incentive for parties to cease engagement in armed conflict. This is an important contribution towards containing violence in conflicts and reducing displacement while providing an impetus for initial reconciliation efforts. Stabilisation measures may also serve to consolidate legitimate political authorities by supporting them in their efforts to offer the population a more persuasive and inclusive vision which is more attractive than competing models of exercising political power.'

The goal of stabilisation is not to maintain a seemingly 'stable' status quo with no regard for the context.

On the contrary: stabilisation usually covers approaches for far-reaching change processes starting out from a

comprehensive concept of security that includes the economic, environmental and human dimensions. These should be aimed at minimising the potential for violence and conflict and taking a realistic view of one's own impact.

Stabilisation at the border crossing between Banki (Nigeria) and Amchide (Cameroon):

The strategic border crossing Banki–Amchide, which is important for regional trade, was permanently closed in 2014 due to raids by Boko Haram; some of the administration and population fled. Since 2019, the Lake Chad Regional Stabilisation Facility funded by Germany and other donors such as the EU, France, the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been financing measures on both sides of the border to enable state structures and basic services to return. A Stabilisation Committee made up of representatives of local administrators, civil society and security forces plans and supervises tasks such as building trenches and an encircling wall to protect against terrorist attacks, holding training sessions on human rights for security forces, building police stations, accommodation for teachers and provisional schoolrooms and providing start-up capital for smaller-scale craft businesses and shops. As a result, cross-border traffic could be resumed and the population's sense of security has considerably improved. Stabilisation in Banki–Amiche has been so successful that further places in the region are now being included in the measures and cross-border trade is also being extended at regional level.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding as a foreign and security policy approach supports political processes in order to prevent a new outbreak of violence. Even if there is a ceasefire and parties to a conflict enter into negotiations, a more peaceful co-existence in the future is by no means guaranteed. Parties to a conflict often have to make difficult compromises, for example in peace agreements. Conflicts fought over resources may persist, and participation might not yet be put into practice. External conditions might also change and have an impact on the original negotiation con-

siderations of the parties to a conflict. Renewed escalation of violent conflicts can be triggered by a great many factors. Measures to consolidate peace are designed to influence parties to a conflict such that they continue to renounce violence at political level in the longer term too because they see that it offers more advantages than disadvantages, even if the road to peace entails difficulties and compromises. Particularly in the wake of an acute crisis, the situation on the ground continues to be dynamic and needs to be analysed precisely and realistically.



Mediation in Sudan and Libya

In November 2018, an agreement was reached at the Federal Foreign Office between Darfur rebels and the Sudanese Government with a view to entering into formal peace negotiations and agreeing on a ceasefire. Along with Jeremiah Mamabolo, Joint Special Representative for Darfur appointed by the African Union (AU) and the UN Security Council and head of the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the parties signed a Pre-Negotiation Agreement for the Resumption of the Peace Process. The agreement mediated by Germany marked the end of an informal mediation process lasting almost two years between the Government of Sudan and two armed Darfur groups; the process was led by the Federal Foreign Office with support from the Berghof Foundation.

In the second half of 2019, the German Government launched the Berlin Process on Libya. The aim was to create the enabling conditions for a peace process within Libya through dialogue with international actors who had influence over the conflict parties. In doing so, Germany provided political support to the negotiations and peace efforts of the United Nations. At the same time, the Federal Foreign Office promoted an informal dialogue ('back-channel') via a third party, which was very conducive to achieving progress in the political process. Together, this ultimately resulted in a ceasefire agreement in October 2020, which in turn led to the creation of an interim government.

A peace process does not end the moment the ink has dried on a peace agreement. That is when implementation starts, and in many cases, it requires politically sensitive, locally informed support adapted to the prevailing political conditions. Germany's international profile as a mediator can be further developed and actively utilised. In the consolidation phase, in particular, what is important are professional and ongoing dialogue, give-and-take between the

actors and the implementation of effective checks and balances for the new governments. That is done using measures that give the parties to a conflict a sense of mutual reliability and create avenues for policy influence, encouraging them to build their societies without violence. This can give more weight to the support of other actors, for example from civil society, in areas such as transitional justice or preventing victor's justice.

Opportunities for peace by including gender perspectives

Gender equality is a cornerstone of German foreign policy and crisis action. This includes promoting the participation of women at all levels and in all phases of crises and conflicts and taking account of gender aspects in all measures implemented as part of integrated action for peace. In crisis contexts in particular, different groups are involved in a wide variety of ways. Young men can be specifically addressed if they are at particular risk of radicalisation or recruitment, for example. Women can and should assume increasingly important roles in and around peace negotiations. However, they also need particular protection in armed conflicts. Integrating these aspects makes a contribution to long-term, lasting conflict resolution.

A better understanding of gender dynamics and power structures, e.g. as part of gender-sensitive conflict analyses, can help identify new approaches, scope for action and actors and thus facilitates more effective and more inclusive measures. Conflicting goals may become apparent, particularly in the case of measures that target male-dominated power players (political elites, security actors and/or parties to a conflict) that do not respect women's rights. In cases such as these, the Federal Foreign Office meets its obligations concerning the equality of all genders by making relevant positions clear and attempting to influence the situation accordingly. It is important here to systematically weigh up short-term goals (e.g. a ceasefire) with medium-term and long-term goals of societal transformation.

Operational approach



Shaping integrated action for peace means political steering based on analyses, responsibly dealing with risks and continually adapting the own actions - to ensure that we stay on track to reach our goals.

At the Federal Foreign Office, Directorate-General S is responsible for providing the operational know-how and financing for projects in crisis contexts (known as Außenpolitik mit Mitteln).

It provides support to the diplomats who engage in political dialogue in crisis countries, who mediate in conflicts and who forge and maintain alliances. It also provides the country and sector divisions at the Federal Foreign Office with instruments to shape international political processes more effectively.

The primacy of politics and how to manage policy dilemmas

Every conflict is different and undergoes change. Effective policy design requires a dynamic interplay between analysis and action, adapted to the local context. There are no standardised approaches. Against the backdrop of our national interest, foreign and security policy crisis engagement begins by looking at the actors, institutions and thematic starting points that make an effective contribution to conflict resolution or can prevent this and examine our own scope for action.

Operational approaches should be derived from political objectives. The decision as to whether it would be better to work multilaterally, with a

federal implementing organisation or with a local non-governmental organisation, for example, is a deliberate one. The measures should also be aligned with the socio-economic needs in the region, but these needs are not what prompts the measure, nor are they the primary focus.

The Federal Foreign Office carefully weighs up conflicting goals. In crises and violent conflicts, there are no perfect solutions – often just better or worse compromises. Norms, interests and values must be repeatedly weighed up against each other. If crisis engagement supports specific actors, this weakens Germany's potential position as a non-partisan mediator in a dialogue or negotiation process. If action by the central government becomes stronger, this often reduces the scope for local negotiation processes. A set of shared values may be lacking with some (local) actors, but without a minimum level of cooperation, the envisaged political process would be less likely to be successful. On the basis of the conditions that prevail in each case, we need to examine whether this kind of partnership is a short-term one or whether the shared values are sufficient for longer-term cooperation. Close cooperation links both sides and also places tighter limits on our own actions. This deliber-

ate mutual dependency means that it is only possible to a very limited extent to attach conditions to support. It is thus important to repeatedly explore the basis of shared interests and subsequently be willing to make adjustments if the coordinates shift.

Generally speaking, measures implemented as part of integrated action for peace are designed to take effect in the longer term and to be sustainable.

In order to 'get our foot in the door' in political terms, speed often takes precedence over thoroughness. The ability to take action requires a willingness to take risks with regards to sustainability too. However, initial measures are then explicitly merely an interim step, integrated into an overall strategic framework that focuses on the long term and is continually refined. It is only in the course of an intervention that measures develop to such an extent that they become compatible with other policy areas. In addition to other German actors, for example in the field of development cooperation, international or local actors are also important for this connectedness.

Constant analysis, flexible planning and steering

The availability of up-to-date information and action-oriented analyses are key success factors. One-off context and actor analyses at the beginning of measures usually only do justice to the complexity of political processes in crisis contexts in the short term; due to the volatility of the situation, they quickly reach their limits, particularly as the information available is often incomplete, confusing and contradictory. The aim is to be able and willing to reassess the situation at any time and to take account of interactions with the measures against the backdrop of the foreign policy strategy and Germany's role. Close monitoring is thus required. Without questioning own values, it is necessary to understand what concepts such as 'legitimacy', 'peace process' and 'civil society' mean to us, but also to relevant local actors, and how it impacts our actions and theirs. Thus, as part of a process of continuous learning and readjustment, the operational approach is constantly reviewed, gradually developed and further refined. Improved monitoring processes form the basis for this.

Stabilisation in northeast Syria

Through its extensive stabilisation activities in northeast Syria, the Federal Foreign Office is making a concrete contribution towards efforts to prevent the resurgence of Daesh. Despite the continuing conflict in Syria and the volatile situation, this gives people in the areas liberated from Daesh hope that their lives may basically become normal again – through safe voluntary return to their homes, socio-economic opportunities, civilian safety and social participation. In the international anti-Daesh coalition, particularly as the co-chair of the Stabilisation Working Group, Germany is strengthening coordination between the international partners and has earned international respect for its efforts. Measures in northeast Syria include maintaining basic services and securing livelihoods, facilitating civilian safety and dialogue to resolve local and regional conflicts, dealing with Daesh crimes and providing informal employment offers and psychosocial counselling in the al Hol and Roj camps.

Foreign policy analysis is the Federal Foreign Office's core competence:

There are limits to which external (implementing) partners can and should assess the significance of information in its entirety and draw conclusions from this for developing and steering measures. In addition to the country divisions, the German missions abroad play a major role as sensors and hubs in the global network of the Federal Foreign Office and the

German Government. This is where information is compiled from all of the partners' policy areas, and the different types of expertise from different backgrounds complement one another in analysing and assessing situations. They are also key coordinating points for information from the international and multilateral partnerships. Respective capacity is required in the German missions abroad in order to make these analytical skills available.

In highly political, sensitive and dynamic territory, options for shaping the landscape arise through a steering logic that builds upon flexibility.

Integrated action for peace is steered on the basis of a dynamic, iterative interplay of political goals, continual planning and, building on that, appropriate implementation of concrete measures. The flow of information must be guaranteed in both directions – from the political process to the project activities in order to steer them, but also from the

projects back to the process, because project partners often have relevant local insight and access that can greatly influence discussions and understanding in the political process.

This ‘agile project steering’ involves a great deal of work and large numbers of staff and requires specialist knowledge and experience that is not sufficiently available either at ministerial level or in the traditional implementing organisations. This kind of expertise is

Stabilisation Platform

The Stabilisation Platform consists of experts who support and advise the Federal Foreign Office in developing, planning and steering projects in complex crisis situations. The Stabilisation Platform enables the Federal Foreign Office to be present and to continue to politically operate where the conditions are most difficult: where often no one else enters any more except for military and humanitarian actors. In terms of policy and content, the Stabilisation Platform is steered by the Federal Foreign Office. In organisational terms, it is attached to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and does not perform any ministerial or sovereign tasks. The Stabilisation Platform is home to those projects that support such work that is particularly sensitive in foreign policy terms in crisis contexts: risk monitoring in highly complex and volatile situations (e.g. Syria and Mali), targeted secondment of experts and technical advice on topics such as peace mediation.

made available through the Stabilisation Platform, for example – in a tailored and flexible manner as required for foreign policy operations (see box).

Willingness to take risks with a sense of proportion

Integrated action for peace is a high-risk investment: In the volatile context of violent conflicts, all actions carry risks. Risks must not be taken blindly but must be calculated realistically. The risk of not reaching our own goals is often high. Yet inaction carries its own risks too. However, the goal of reducing violent conflicts is worth taking well-considered risks for if there is a chance of success.

The Federal Foreign Office has developed an instrument for structured foreign policy risk management: Stabilisation risk analyses (SRAs) address the risk of unintended effects that run counter to foreign policy goals. The pooled foreign policy competence of the regional division, the German mission abroad and Directorate-General S are combined to systematically identify risks associated with the project measures and take a conscious decision as to whether these risks should be taken.

For integrated action for peace, we must therefore not only ‘do no harm’, but also in particular ‘know the risks’:

Measures should not involuntarily exacerbate conflicts, nor should they create new conflicts. Even if they are weighed up with the utmost care, measures may fail, but that does not necessarily mean that the approach was wrong. Conflict sensitivity in stabilisation contexts entails developing a full and honest understanding of how the own presence, the own role and the resultant local expectations impact the violence dynamics and conditions in the region.

Interactions between sanctions and measures implemented as part of integrated action for peace must be taken into account too:

Sanctions are part of the foreign policy toolkit. The aim of sanctions is to change the behaviour of the relevant party to the conflict. Stabilisation measures must not run counter to the sanctions that have been decided on – an important aspect of risk management for the measures. Moreover, sanctions must be precisely matched to the crisis situations and must not excessively obstruct other constructive measures. This applies in particular to mediation,

where trust and cooperation by all the parties to the conflict are necessary for using the instrument, which can be jeopardised by clumsily deployed sanctions. The Federal Foreign Office thus

advocates closer links between sanctions and other political instruments and stabilisation measures within the EU and the United Nations and with other international partners.

Foreign policy context monitoring

The territories in northwest and northeast Syria are not accessible for diplomats and the staff of the GFFO's implementing partners. However, due to dynamic political and military developments in the project areas, there is a need for reliable and systematic information about the local context and how it evolves. It is on such an information base that political responsibility for urgently needed bilateral project activities in the crisis regions can be assumed. The context monitoring system (AKM) commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office, which is separate from project measures, focuses on observing factors that are relevant to foreign policy 'red lines' and project steering in areas such as terrorist funding.

The foreign policy context monitoring system (AKM) is independent of the implementing partners to avoid conflicts of interest (third-party monitoring), among other issues. Information that is freely available in the project areas is obtained through contact networks there. Key topics include information about the local control, condition and political focus of the relevant local governance structures and scope for action by civil society groups. For example, the system is used to analyse who collaborates with terrorist groups, pays them 'tax' or otherwise supports or tolerates them. This information can be used directly for project steering and measures can be adapted accordingly.



Dynamic learning

Measuring a foreign policy impetus can only be done justice on foreign policy terms: Integrated action for peace is not geared towards a need that can be measured by technical means; instead, it creates momentum to support political processes. Its results can therefore only be assessed in foreign policy terms: Have the measures supported efforts to estab-

lish a peace process? Have they influenced the behaviour of relevant actors? Has this created a diplomatic opportunity for further activities? Has it consolidated alliances? Has it opened up communication channels that could be used for prevention efforts if the crisis escalates?

Dynamic learning entails more than merely monitoring indicators and milestones; in fact, the Federal Foreign Office constantly reviews its underlying assumptions and the insights obtained to date. The approach taken by the Federal Foreign Office is designed to be adjusted within the overall objectives and to fundamentally change the parameters of a measure if conditions change or if expectations are not met and objectives can no longer be achieved. This means that learning does not take place once the measure is over. These kinds of adjustments are a necessary part of the process.

Adaptive monitoring and accompanying evaluations support dynamic and institutional learning and have contributed to decisive improvements in adjustments of projects, for example in implementing the strategic evaluation of the ‘transformation partnerships’ (see box on p. 51/Ta’ziz Partnership).

Discussions with experts from the academic community, for example in the scientific hubs associated with Directorate-General S, are another important element in this learning process.

The Federal Foreign Office also aims to refine its practice of learning lessons. If it becomes clear that developments are stalling or are moving in the wrong direction, an ‘exit strategy’ is not automatically required. In many cases, we should begin by examining the conditions of the cooperation to establish whether the necessary success factors do in fact exist – and how active steps can be taken to adjust. On the basis of this it is possible to examine, where needed, whether and how the measure and its compatibility can be improved. In light of such a consideration it can be assessed whether integrated action for peace is still the right instrument or whether the measures should be handed over to other actors.

Experience from involvement in Afghanistan

International involvement in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021 showed that more realism and humility are required in international crisis engagement. Between combating terrorism and state-building, achievable goals must be defined on the basis of a careful analysis, continually reviewed and, where necessary, adapted. Involvement by the national government is a crucial factor in the success or failure of an initiative. The international community has had to (and still needs to) learn a great deal: socio-economic progress alone is no more able to achieve peace than military intervention. Huge aid budgets, if not adequately steered, can encourage corruption, create unrealistic expectations regarding rapid change and in the worst case even undermine the legitimacy of state institutions.

Findings about the local situation must be used more quickly and in a more targeted manner to adapt support. A detailed understanding of the power structures and current dynamics on the ground is required. This must be taken into account when designing projects and, where necessary, adjustments must be made. To do so, flexible instruments are required that are subject to political processes. The Federal Foreign Office has continually refined these flexible instruments based on experience in Afghanistan. However, the ultimate conclusion drawn from the dolorous experience with involvement in Afghanistan to date must not be to reduce global security policy engagement, because the challenges and threats the world is facing remain.

Instruments



Our actions in crisis contexts strengthen legitimate order, offer a peace dividend, democracy, rule of law and security. Militias have to be disarmed, extremism and crime combatted – these are the instruments of integrated action for peace.

The Federal Foreign Office's policy approaches in the area of integrated action for peace can be divided into thematic instruments. These instruments are used in a context-specific way, are combined flexibly and are subject to the specific foreign policy aims. Key instruments include targeted support for the return of the state and state-building in conflict areas, where appropriate with a combined civilian and military approach; security sector reform (SSR), including developing the police force; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); promoting the rule of law; peace mediation; promoting democracy; and combating violent extremism and international crime. The Federal Foreign Office has successively developed expertise and operational know-how in these areas in recent years, not least through in-depth dialogue with the scientific community, civil society and international partner institutions.

With regard to those instruments there are important complementary approaches in other line ministries, some of which are also used in peace-

building while others are used in its own terms. The main difference how the instruments are used lies in the overall goal, which in the Federal Foreign Office's area of responsibility is a clearly political one.

One example of instruments that are used flexibly in different thematic areas is the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

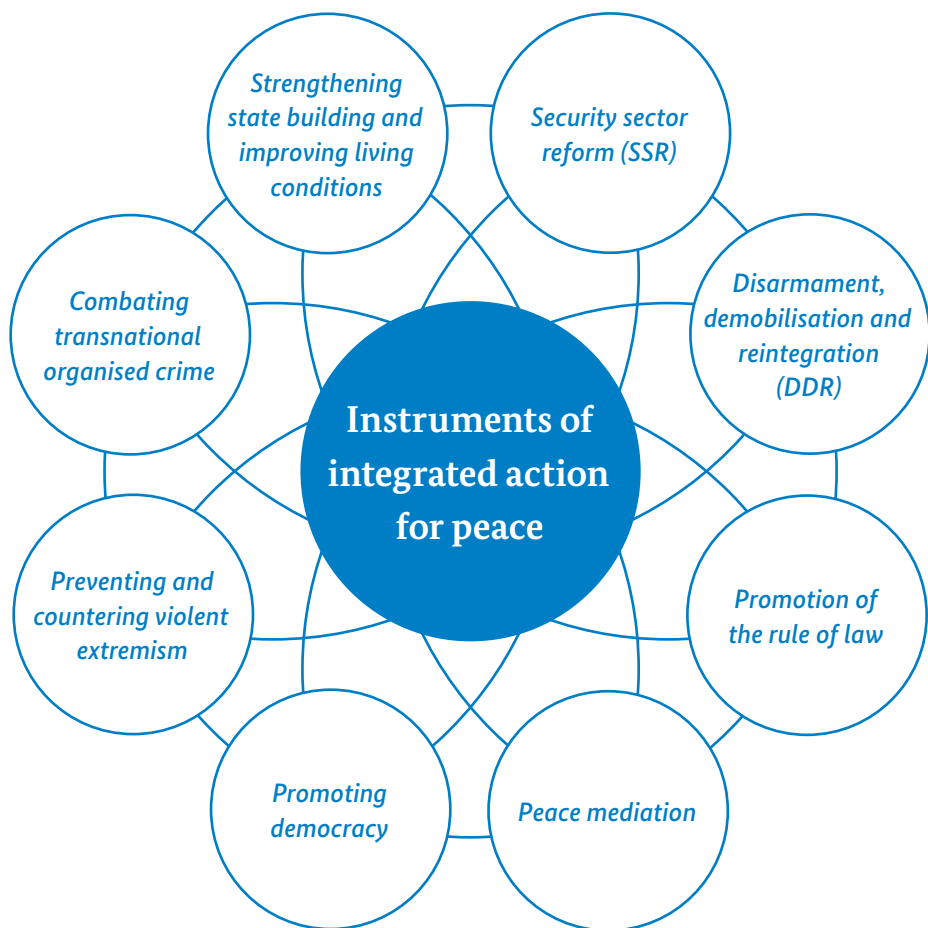
The fund implements a wide variety of measures within a strategic framework in the field of crisis prevention, transitions, cross-border cooperation, and climate and security. Germany is now one of the Peacebuilding Fund's largest donors. The Federal Foreign Office is also involved in the donor group with a view to enhancing the results orientation of the fund, promoting innovative, more sustainable financing models and improving the fund's performance regarding gender-sensitive peacebuilding. This entails not only involving more women in peace processes, but also using enhanced processes to ensure that their concerns really are addressed. Diverse representation can thus have a lasting positive effect on the peace process.

Strengthening state building and improving living conditions

Measures that immediately help improve the situation of (certain) sections of the population can have a considerable influence on conflict dynamics if they are seen to be connected with a political process or actor and hence strengthen the legitimacy of statehood. This is often referred to as peace dividends that can be reaped as a result of specific improvements, for example in infrastructure or services, if parties renounce violence or support peace processes (see box on p. 22/Peace dividends). Measures such as these foster trust between the state and its citizens and build the state's capacity to take action. As with all measures implemented as part of integrated action for peace, the focus is on analysis and close steering. Who exactly needs support and why? Measures can demonstrate to the population that certain councils are working to promote their interests, for example, or can show that parties to

a conflict who adopt a (more) peaceful path can visibly mobilise support for their constituency. Not least concrete improvements are also designed to protect certain at-risk sections of the population.

The range of measures in this context is particularly broad and depends on the particular situation. They may support the police, administration or education institutions in providing basic services. Explosive ordnances and booby traps may be cleared and the basic infrastructure for electricity, water or roads rebuilt. Interventions may strengthen the local administration and promote employment. Measures are initiated to combat the negative effects of irregular migration, such as human trafficking and smuggling. Population groups at risk are protected more effectively, as are the country's borders. In addition, support is provided to help the return and reintegration of migrants from transit countries.



Security sector reform (SSR)

Security institutions and actors often play a key role for initiatives in the field of crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding: Unpaid, poorly equipped and poorly led security forces cannot protect the population effectively. In some cases, they create less rather than more security for the population, e.g. through excessive violence

or repression, especially as state security providers are often not the only actors in the security sector. Militia and civil defence groups may be similarly responsible for both security and insecurity. This causes lasting damage to citizens' trust in the state. There is also a danger that military forces may assert their political interests by carrying out military coups.

Integrated action for peace after the epochal tectonic shift (Zeitenwende)

The Federal Foreign Office responded to Russia's attack on Ukraine by providing unwavering support to the Ukrainian Government and civil society with a view to strengthening resilience against the Russian aggression at all levels. The focus of this support is adapted dynamically to how the war develops and to Ukraine's needs. At the time of writing, the focus is on support for measures designed to reintegrate the areas liberated from Russian occupation into Ukraine's state and to re-establish basic social services. Another priority area involves supporting the documentation of human rights violations and war crimes, in particular identifying victims of war. Moreover, we have given priority to the needs of the Ukrainian security forces as part of the initiative to enable and enhance implemented in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry of Defence. Both ministries are closely coordinating their projects in Ukraine and are sharing budget responsibility.

Comprehensive security sector reform (SSR) makes the work of the security actors more effective to guarantee the safety of all population groups.³

At the same time, however, the security forces must be urged to take the (human) rights-based focus of their work seriously and to strengthen civilian control. Equipment and training are interlinked and are supported by conceptual advice for the partners. Strengthening control and governance decreases the risk of ‘unleashing’ security forces and reduces the particular susceptibility towards corruption in the sector. Parliament, civil society and the media can work together here. Pertinent reform processes must always be integrated into an overarching political process and supported by political actors. Without this, external support for SSR cannot be successful.

Civilian security forces have a key role to play, particularly in internal crisis contexts,

as they are deployed both to prevent conflict and to secure agreed conflict solutions and are tasked with meeting the population’s basic security needs on a permanent basis. In its SSR activities, the Federal Foreign Office thus focuses heavily on establishing an operational, citizen-responsive police force that upholds the rule of law. Police reforms can result in the police becoming a guarantor of internal security if their actions are based on the rule of law. The police must cease to be an institution abused by autocratic or dictatorial governments to assert state claims to power. Equally, there is a regular need for rebuilding the necessary trust between the population and security authorities. Multilateral support, where available, for example through UN missions or civilian common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions, is the priority approach here, supplemented by bilateral approaches.

³ The Interministerial Strategy to Support Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the context of crisis prevention, conflict transformation and peacebuilding provides an important framework for the use of this instrument.

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)

Combatants, both current and former, such as militia members and insurgents, pose a particular challenge to stabilisation and peacebuilding, not only after a peace agreement, but in many cases also before and during negotiations. The complexity of these kinds of process must be taken into

account here. The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants is not only a technical process but also a highly political one: armed actors must be shown an alternative – politically, economically and socially – to violence and conflict⁴. A successful DDR process requires comprehensive political involvement by all the stakeholders and a context-specific concept that takes account of all levels

⁴ The Interministerial Strategy to Support Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation (Transitional Justice) highlights important approaches in this area.

Establishing mobile border police surveillance units in Niger

In areas near borders in particular, it is sometimes difficult to enforce the state's monopoly on the use of force and to guarantee the safety of its citizens, giving rise to the risk that terrorists and organised crime groups may create parallel structures (local shadow governments). Niger asked the international community for help in improving its border protection by setting up mobile units to be able to monitor the country's long borders more effectively. As Germany's analyses confirmed this need, the relevant financial support was provided. Police consulting and training – elements provided by units such as the EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger) – are interlinked with equipment and infrastructure measures. The mission by the common security and defence policy in the region is building the necessary trust between Niger's border protection units and the population through measures to promote dialogue alongside the project.

of the conflict and parties to it and that identifies political and socio-economic perspectives. Further approaches, such as community violence reduction to contain the potential for violence and to manage arms and munition, can be part of this kind of process or can make an important contribution before, during and after a peace process. DDR should thus always be used in combination with other instruments and approaches such as security sector reform, mediation, (context-sensitive) amnesty or criminal prosecution, always taking the political constellations and feasibility into account, and should be carefully balanced out.

Promotion of the rule of law

Order based on rights and rules is the foundation for peaceful co-existence.

Crises may arise if the social contract laid down in the constitution is not (or no longer) broadly accepted. In post-conflict settings, constitutions in particular provide a legal foundation for peace negotiations and mediation results. The promotion of the rule of law aims to create order based on rights and rules as the basis for peace-

ful co-existence. It is highly important to strengthen a constitution that regulates the results of peace negotiations in a legally binding way following a conflict, that guarantees the rights of both individuals and groups and that lends legitimacy to and restricts state rule. Promotion of the rule of law focuses on holding the executive branch of government accountable to the law and on monitoring by courts or other arbitration mechanisms, including non-state ones. Conflicts are settled non-violently by means of local law, which is integrated into a framework of norms and institutions as part of the relevant regional order and the international order. Not infrequently, criminal law and overcoming impunity are highly important for a country's stability. Ideally, implementation of legal projects in the partner countries is supported by international agreements in which the partner country obliges itself to reform the rule of law in the country. Sectoral support that keeps sight of political possibilities and needs is always important.



Dealing with the past and reconciliation (transitional justice) are very important steps after violent conflicts in particular and are closely linked to promotion of the rule of law.⁵ In

this context, mechanisms that take an approach beyond criminal prosecution (truth and reconciliation commissions, collective historical memory, school textbooks) can make an important contribution to achieving peace.

Peace mediation

Peace mediation refers to conflict mediation by a third party on a volun-

tary basis and accepted by the parties to the conflict in formal and informal negotiation and dialogue processes.

Peace mediation supported by the Federal Foreign Office is increasingly focusing on societal dialogue processes and on support for political mediation at government level with a view to conflict solution, for example in ceasefires or peace agreements. Mediation-based crisis diplomacy is deployed in a whole range of areas, including measures to contain risks and violence, stabilisation, and efforts to achieve lasting peace within society.

⁵ The Strategy of the Federal Government for Promoting the Rule of Law and the Interministerial Strategy to Support Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation (Transitional Justice) also provide key guidance in this area.

Constitutional reform in Sudan

In Sudan, the Federal Foreign Office has been working with the Max Planck Foundation since 2014 to support technical and sector-specific advice on constitutional reforms and their implementation. While this was initially done in the light of reform efforts as part of a National Dialogue under the former President al-Bashir and the Sudanese National Legislature, following the ousting of Bashir the Federal Foreign Office supported the new interim government in its efforts to establish sustainable solutions by acting as a mediator between the conflicting interests. Another coup was staged, however, and since then the project has been focusing once again on academic exchange designed to provide guidance for the sensitive area of the national constitution in future.

A mediation support structure set up in recent years along with greater funding enables technical logistical, operational and academic expertise to be used in a targeted way to support high-level mediation interventions by third parties or to promote Germany's role as a mediator. The work of the Federal Foreign Office focuses on the following areas in this context:

- **Involvement by the Federal Foreign Office itself in close coordination with its alliance partners:** When the Federal Foreign Office plays a direct political role as a mediator, it supports dialogue formats, seconds special envoys or plays a mediating role in a process of shuttle mediation. The aim of this is to facilitate an agreement between two or more parties on a particular topic.
- **Support and coordinate mediation processes by third parties:** Third parties supported by the Federal Foreign Office sometimes have access to key actors and can thus respond directly and straightforwardly to complex conflict dynamics.

- **Support for multilateral engagement and strategic cooperation at Government level:** The Federal Foreign Office supports mediation procedures by the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU by providing both funding and experts and endeavours to consolidate bilateral partnerships in the field of mediation.

Conceptual development and professionalisation: Germany has developed extensive technical expertise underpinned by evidence and boasts a particularly wide range of civil society mediation actors. These actors draw on expertise based on many years of practical experience acquired in mediation processes and make it available to local actors, conflict parties and cooperation partners for capacity building. The Federal Foreign Office harnesses this extensive experience to refine the concepts used in mediation too, for example in connection with climate-related conflicts. A supporting role or direct mediation requires trust and credibility among all the parties to a conflict. Integrated action for peace can create

conditions that are conducive to mediation, for example by building trust and gaining access to all the parties to the conflict. At the same time, some kind of support may be perceived as taking sides, especially if it focuses on one side only. For that reason, any engagement by the Federal Foreign Office in a conflict context is examined right from the start to identify any possible dilemmas concerning objectives and results.

Promoting democracy

Democracies are facing considerable pressure across the globe. Democracy movements are being confronted by state and non-state violence on a large scale, and the scope for civil society engagement is shrinking in many places. The instruments for promoting democracy are used for integrated action for peace in contexts in which democratic structures are in acute danger and there is a risk of destabilisation, for example in young democracies that still need to be consolidated following transition processes.

Elections and issues concerning parliamentary control and participation in political decision-making processes are particularly critical points in the course of many crises.

If sections of the population are excluded from decision-making, this can lead to the outbreak of violence and can cause existing lines of conflict to become entrenched. At the same time, fair and free elections or the knowledge that conflict parties can make their voice heard by peaceful means can support non-violent conflict settlement. The Federal Foreign Office's work focuses on four priority areas:

- **Electoral assistance and observation:** Supports elections at all levels that are deemed to be particularly relevant because of the momentous impact they have on the overall political landscape, because of an acute risk perceived to exist for their democratic implementation or because of their significance for regional stability, for example. Electoral assistance covers the entire electoral cycle, so it explicitly includes the period between periodic elections too.

- **Parliamentary assistance and consulting:** Strengthens parliaments in relation to the executive branch, supports them in their public relations work or in measures to increase citizen responsiveness, for example, promotes exchange between parliamentarians and staff in collaboration with the administration of the German Bundestag and provides expertise on setting up and developing parliamentary structures.
- **Strengthening civil society in the democratic process and increasing democratic participation:** Particularly acute in contexts in which civil society engagement is increasingly being

restricted by state and non-state acts ('shrinking spaces'). Ethnic, religious and other vulnerable groups, particularly women and young people, and minorities are included in democratic decision-making processes.

- **Support for objective and free media:** These measures promote a pluralistic media as the basis for democratic consensus-building, which is currently coming under increasing pressure due to the targeted spread of false information. At the same time, new communication technologies facilitate civil society exchange and networking, particularly in repressive contexts.



Ta'ziz Partnership

In response to the upheavals of the Arab Spring, the Federal Foreign Office developed two complementary and flexible instruments – the Transformation Partnership and the Scientific Partnership support programmes – to support democratic and rule of law processes in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East and to promote civil society participation and networking. The Transformation Partnership was restructured in 2020–2021: closely targeting political processes, the funding provided by Directorate-General S has since been focused on countries in which support can build on democratic and rule of law transformation processes. The projects implemented by the long-term Scientific Partnership launched by Directorate-General 6 focus on cultural and education policy and keep open the option of creating scope for pre-political agency for the next generation in countries that have not yet embarked on a transformation journey. Together, these two programmes form the Ta'ziz Partnership for Democracy. The Arabic word ta'ziz means strengthening or consolidation, which highlights the core aim of the programme, namely, to strengthen democratic reforms and structures.

Preventing and countering violent extremism

Radicalisation and violent extremism are global phenomena and have considerable potential for destabilisation, even in peaceful societies. They often have a cross-border impact due to the internet and global networking. Violent extremism in particular – the use, support or facilitation of violence to

achieve political, ideological or religious goals with extremist elements – causes crises, extends conflicts and reduces the likelihood that peacebuilding efforts will be successful. Extremist groups operating across national boundaries can bolster organised crime, and vice versa. Moreover, they jeopardise the security of German citizens in Germany and abroad.

In order to take effective measures to combat the destabilising effects of extremism and radicalisation, a combination of preventive and reactive approaches is required. Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) addresses the causes of violent extremism and its structural factors, taking a long-term, pro-development perspective. In contrast, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) focuses on measures geared primarily towards individuals, groups or communities at risk. These measures are designed to prevent active extremists from carrying out acts of violence and to subsequently help deradicalise and reintegrate them into society.

Integrated action for peace by the Federal Foreign Office focuses on CVE, supplementing its approach with preventive elements. This engagement is primarily carried out in fragile contexts with a view to taking targeted steps to prevent the resurgence of extremist groups. In order to remove the breeding ground for violent extremism in crisis and conflict regions, it is important for security forces and civilian authorities to cooperate such that people feel understood and safe. This also involves working to dispel toxic forms of masculinity

that glorify violence, for example. At the same time, deradicalisation is a hugely political topic in some countries and the issue of who is defined as an extremist may be used to suppress opposition figures. Measures in this field must therefore be designed very carefully and considered in the light of our values.

Combating transnational organised crime

Almost all of the current large-scale conflicts – from Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan to South East Asia and Latin America – are heavily influenced by transnational organised crime (TOC), which can cause, exacerbate or extend conflicts. TOC operates in conflict contexts and undermines peace and stabilisation efforts by weakening state structures. Foreign and security policy deliberations thus need to focus more heavily on the fight against TOC.

TOC cooperates with terrorist groups in many cases. Although the motivations of terrorist and criminal groups differ – terrorism usually aims to actively destroy state authority, while TOC is primarily geared towards profits – they

cooperate in many crisis contexts, as terrorism is partly financed through TOC. Capacity development in the partner countries to take effective measures against TOC thus overlaps with the fight against terrorism in some areas.

Analysis and assessments of the current situation, specific projects and policy recommendations to fight TOC are developed in close cooperation with German federal ministries, international partners and the expert community. Activities to address the problem of TOC to date through trade policy (product piracy), environmental policy (natural resources), migration/human rights policy (smuggling-related crime, human trafficking) and police channels (drugs, weapons smuggling) offer important starting points here.

Outlook



What are the factors that cause conflicts – which are inevitable in a society – to deteriorate into violent crises? More and more specific (experience-based) knowledge is required to understand these factors and to enable early and targeted actions. There has been a steep learning curve in the field of stabilisation in recent years, as a result of which an elaborate set of instruments is now available. In the field of prevention, the level of understanding and the instruments themselves still need to be honed and improved. Crisis prevention is a worthwhile investment. Tackling the crises of this world in a serious manner requires honesty and humility in order to make a difference in a more targeted, more carefully considered and more integrated way.

Integrated, pragmatic, tangible peace policy must always be challenged and challenge itself to achieve real progress. The present concept combines valuable and often difficult experience from previous conflicts in places such as

Afghanistan and Iraq with a look ahead. Even if the impacts of Russia's attack on Ukraine cannot yet be seen in their entirety at the time of writing, it is clear that the challenges require to repeatedly question and refine own strategic capabilities in highly dynamic contexts. Values and interests that guide these actions are not opposites, but instead belong together. A clear definition of interests and the associated objectives not only helps to improve a strategic positioning, it also enhances transparency, predictability and reliability as partners. The Federal Foreign Office puts the capacities described in this concept into service to pursue an active peace policy.

Legal notice

Publisher

Federal Foreign Office
 Department S
 Werderscher Markt 1
 10117 Berlin

Last revised

December 2022

Printing

Zarbock GmbH und Co. KG
 Sontraer Straße 6
 60386 Frankfurt am Main

Design

LHLK Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH
 10827 Berlin

Image credits

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